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RP 99% 'jueteng'-free! Rosales not amused

By Christian Esguerra, Luige A. del Puerto and Alexan Pupa

THE PHILIPPINES is "99 percent" free from "jueteng," according to the Philippine National

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Explain Boracay project, lawmakers ask AFP brass

By Philip C. Tubeza and Norman Mendoza

LAWMAKERS yesterday said they would seek an explanation from the Armed Forces and defense department on the secret construction of a military resort on Boracay, revealed in an exclusive Inquirer report, in the midst of

Witness tags Mikey in 'jueteng' payola

2 congressmen, ex-lawmaker, gov also named

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

THE NAMES mentioned, one of his lips like bombs in a packed Senate hearing room by witnesses viewed across the nation.

Testifying for three hours under a cloak of immunity, confessed "jueteng" operator Bong Ilagan's son, Batangas Rep. Jose Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo, two other incumbent congressmen and a former lawmaker are among the national officials who allegedly received huge gambling payoffs.

Quoting what he said is a jueteng lagman had told him, Mayor and Arroyo's alleged payola cut amounted to "P600,000 per month" in one area alone.

The 30-year-old barangay chair also maintained that Philippine National Police Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. and other officials had received payments or had been involved in jueteng, adding that he was even against in legalization.

The testimonies inside the Senate and lasted hours of the Senate iron as they as Mayor's testimony.

But the witness made it clear that he had no hard evidence to back his allegations, saying his statements were based mainly on what jueteng bagmen had told him.

Mayor, a barangay chair from Tagas, Daraga, Albay, mentioned three active or former representatives from Albay—ex-lawmaker Ernie Lagman Gutierrez, Rep. Gerardo Espinosa and Rep. Joey Salceda—as having received monthly jueteng protection money totaling P250,000, P500,000 and P400,000, respectively.

Mayor said he operated jueteng games in Albay, Pangasinan, Baguio City and Benguet between 1998 and 2000 and between 2000 and 2001.

Senators smiled when Mayor denied all the rumors of involvement while expanding his illegal gambling operation from its modest start in a small barangay in Daraga, Albay, into a multimillion-peso business covering the huge market of Pangasinan as he moved on Benguet.

He told the senators that at one time, he was pressing as much as P90 million a month from his hometown jueteng operations.

He says was he of a paper trail that he turned his jueteng ledgers and other loose sheets every month, Mayor said. He said he stopped his operations in late 2000 to run for mayor of Daraga in the May 2001 elections.

Mayor has not only the election but also his jueteng "franchises" in Albay and in southern Luzon. Another gambling lord had taken over and he could not operate himself back in.

"Starting a jueteng is years of money," Mayor said in his preliminaries at the Senate inquiry into the illegal numbers game, sounding like a man who had had a dramatic change of heart.

"The small people are the ones who are victimized . . . If before there was no cheating in jueteng, today cheating in the numbers game is already negating," the ex-jueteng operator said Senator said.

Mayor said demands he pro-

REP. Jose Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo: Testimony trumped-up

LOPEZ: Could not recall meeting

SALCEDA: "I don't know a thing in...

LAGMAN-LUSTRE: Complete rubbish

SANCHEZ: Politically motivated witch-hunt.

JUETENG PAYOLA

According to Wilfredo Ornares Mayor, alias "Boy Mayor," "Sta Rosa" or "Bill," the jueteng payola amounted to P7.5 million a month, which was given in the following persons through their alleged bagmen:

P7.5 M / mo.

- P600,000/mo. PNP Regional Commander
- P500,000/mo. "Local banks"
- P250,000/mo. PNP Provincial Director
- P250,000/week Daraga Governor Boy Salceda
- P600,000/mo. Rep. Jose Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo
- P400,000/mo. Albay Rep. Joker "Joey" Salceda
- P500,000/mo. Albay Rep. Carlos Imperial
- P250,000/mo. Ex-Albay Rep. Ernie Lagman Lustre
- P200,000/mo. "Media Boys"
- P150,000/mo. DILG "operatives"
- P100,000/mo. "Bill Manila"
- P100,000/mo. ex-Undersecretary Gonzalez Interior

MAYOR: We operate by oriental license.

GMA slams opposition over smear campaign

By Carla P. Gomez
PEP Reporter

SAN DARLIN CITY (President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday answered the opposition's conducting a smear campaign against her administration by implicating her husband, son and brother-in-law in the "jueteng" scandal in a bid to "undermine my ability to govern."

Speaking at the inauguration of the national fuel efficient program in this city hours before the Senate began its inquiry into the illegal numbers racket, the President made the strongest statement yet defending First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, her son Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo and her brother-in-law Rep. Ignacio Arroyo.

Mr. Arroyo was not hiding challenges facing her administration now that she had embarked on the second phase of her economic reform program when she retired as the jueteng allegations against her family.

"I don't think that I'm somehow naive or unrealistic. I'm fully aware of the challenges that remain and the people who believe the opposition would go to undermine my ability to govern," she said.

"For instance, the allegations against my husband, my son and even my brother in law are part of a well-worn opposition tactic," the President said.

"Whenever the people had been offered, I'm talking the allegations seriously and I've asked for an extensive investigation and will let the chips fall where they may."

'Small people are the ones victimized'

By Norman Bordadora

CALLS LAUDING yesterday's operator—that was how confessed "jueteng" operator Wilfredo Ornares Mayor came across when he spoke at the Senate yesterday and set off his bombshell, sparing not even the President's elder son.

Mayor, 36, portrayed himself as a man who tried to cover his tracks while expanding his illegal

Gov't hospital officials confirm dark stories in delivery rooms

By Christine V. Esguerra

THE TONGUE-LASHINGS turned out to be true.

Two officials of Dr. Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital in Manila privately admitted they were aware that some of their doctors and nurses had verbally abused pregnant mothers, as told to the Inquirer by two health workers and a former nursing trainee.

But Director Jeffrey Leonardo and Deputy Dr. Jo Mei said the cases were "isolated" and involved either misguided or overworked staff members of the government hospital.

"We've caught them several times doing what could be considered verbal abuse on some patients," Dr. Jo Pin told the Inquirer, referring to some medical residents.

Leonardo, chief of the hospital's medical professions services,

MISS PHILIPPINES-EARTH: Bernadette Reagan is overjoyed as she is the crowd after being proclaimed Miss Philippines-Earth at the UP Theater in Quezon City. Flanking her are (from left) Aprilyn Villanueva, Miss Philippines-Basketball; Nadia Lee Cox de la Cruz, Miss Philippines-Air; Arlene Villanueva, Miss Philippines-Water, and Antonette Stephanie Fu, Miss Philippines-Fire.

RP economy shows resilience

By Michelle V. Rivera
Business

THE PHILIPPINE economy showed resilience in the first three months of the year, growing by 4.6 percent despite weak agricultural output, sluggish exports and high oil prices, according to government data.

The first-quarter growth of the gross domestic product (GDP), the sum of all the goods and services produced within the Philippines, was better than the 3.4-percent growth forecast made by Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri during a briefing.

In comparison, the country's GDP expanded by 3.1 percent in the same period in 2001 on years to a full-year 3.1 percent growth, the first in eight years.

A comparison by Neri, however, indicated the GDP grew by a seasonally adjusted 1.1 percent from the last quarter of 2001, picking up from the 0.6 percent growth in the October-to-December period.

Romulo Neri, economy, gro

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

BEYOND HONORABLE, LASTING PEACE

Moros want more than autonomy

CAMP DARAPANAN—Muslim separatists in the southern Philippines said Monday that peace was within reach but that they wanted more than autonomy in exchange for permanently ending three decades of conflict.

Ebrahim Murad, chair of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, told up to 150,000 supporters gathered in this guerrilla camp that "true, honorable and lasting peace is partly in hand," as the rebels prepared to enter a key round of peace talks with the government in Malaysia.

Murad denounced terrorism and said Malaysian-brokered negotiations—bolstered by a ceasefire monitor—showed that "seemingly irresolvable issues" could be resolved as long as both sides approached the peace process with "an open mind and sincerity."

"After decades of unrelenting struggle, we believe we have begun a just and comprehensive political solution ... to a dreadful," said Murad from an elaborately festooned stage flanked by coconuts and coconut plantations. He appealed to Christians to "cast aside mistrust" of Muslims.

Tangible result

At a meeting in Kuala Lumpur last month, the two sides made progress on resolving the Moro lawyers' ancestral rights claims—the first tangible result in years of negotiations. Another round of talks is scheduled for next month.

Rebel spokesperson Eid Kabalu said the three-day MILF opening assembly which ends today aims to devise a "new formula" to address long-standing grievances of Filipino Muslims, who have accused the government of the predominantly Roman Catholic country of neglecting their rights and economic development.

"Obviously, the present formula—autonomy—is not working," Kabalu said.

"None of these formulas implemented in the past have solved the problems of our people," said Chairman Murad. MILF may shun its political affiliate, blaming such relations to trying to use the rebel unit to be serving moderates.

Federal approach

"The more he takes the pill, the more his illness gets worse," Kabalu told the gathering.

He said the MILF was open to various proposals, including a federal approach with less centralized government control.

The government has indicated it would consider expanding an autonomous region for Muslim Mindanao, which was created as a result of a 1996 peace agreement with a former rebel group, the Moro National Liberation Front.

MILF veterans broke away from the MNLF because they were unhappy with the existing arrangements.

CHR statement

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday hailed the peace consultations and expressed confidence peace would eventually reign in the South.

"I welcome and support all peaceful, democratic and people-based consultations for peace and development," the President said in a statement.

She also commended the military and police as well as the MILF for their efforts to ensure the "large peace consultations of MILF constituencies."

The three-day assembly, the biggest gathering of members and sympathizers of the secessionist group that opened this day was called to affirm the MILF as the representative of the Bangsamoro people as well as to commit members on solutions to the Mindanao problem.

"The success gathers its strength from the diversity of ideas and expressions channeled into effective democratic processes and rests on the negotiating table and not in the battlefield," President Arroyo said.

Muddy trail

Murad welcomed diplomats from Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) countries, World Bank officials and Philippine government representatives as they were received along a muddy trail into the camp on the outskirts of Cotabato City on the island of Mindanao.

A mix of colorful tents and bamboo shielded Muslim men and women in colorful multihued attire as they squatted on floors to thread spools.

While MILF fighters were prepared to die for their cause, Murad said the group was "very much opposed to any form of terrorism," which he said was "incompatible" with the group's struggle to bring economic and political development to the poor areas of Mindanao.

Murad's statement came after Kabalu said the MILF had agreed to hunt down 53 Islamic militants at least of an agreement in 2002 to have also at least provided elements in their areas.

"We have a list of criminal elements the government has submitted to us to be apprehended," Kabalu told reporters late Monday.

Suspicion on list

MILF officials were now "validating" the list, which includes the names of renegade Muslim rebels with possible links to the terrorist Jemaah Islamiyah as well as Khaddafy Janjalani, the leader of the Abu Sayyaf.

The Abu Sayyaf has been blamed for the Philippines' worst terrorist bombings and a spate of kidnappings, while the JI is said to be linked to al Qaeda.

Intelligence reports that foreign JI members were undergoing bomb-making training in MILF camps had prompted a heightened security operation.

The MILF has denied the reports, but security analysts said JI elements appeared to be increasingly infiltrating Muslim liberation movements, including the MILF and the Abu Sayyaf.

Asked whether the MILF would pursue any of its own commanders if they were found to be shielding those on the wanted list, Kabalu said: "No, of course. This is the mandate of the AHM (Ad Hoc Joint Action Group)." Christine O. Avendaño, AP, AFP Reuters

MILF Chair Ebrahim Murad and Libyan Ambassador Salem Adam Seiwa in a speaker on the second day of the constitutive assembly.

Cuban request a ploy?

DIPLOMATIC and a mere media ploy to embarrass the United States.

This sentiment was outlined in the Department of Foreign Affairs reaction to the Cuban Embassy's recent use of a press conference rather than official channels to seek blanket support for the extradition of a Cuban immigrant from the US.

While Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo yesterday said the request was to be "studied," another ranking DFA official said Havana should have first conveyed its request formally (through the usual channels).

"It's undiplomatic because it didn't follow the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations," said the official, who asked not to be named. "It's usually done discreetly."

The official surmised that the press conference, held last Saturday in Makati City by Cuban Ambassador Jorge Bey Jimenez, was just "for media mileage to embarrass the US."

During reporters, Jimenez had asked Philippine officials to help stop Washington from extraditing Luis Posada Carriles, the principal suspect in the 1976 bombing of a Cubana airliner that killed 73 people.

Posada had sought political asylum in the US last month after escaping from a Venezuelan prison while awaiting sentencing for the airplane bombing. The Cuban Embassy claimed Posada worked for the US Central Intelligence Agency.

The Cuban Embassy should have first communicated the request to the DFA, "then maybe we could (have held) a joint press conference," the DFA official said.

DFA spokesperson Gilberto Asuncion, Jimenez's wife, said the despatch had yet to receive an official communication from the Cuban Embassy regarding Posada. Gil Cabacungan

MORE OPPOR JOB MA
More employment opportunities in today's
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
JOB Market
Where You Find The Best.

'Small people are the ones ...

From page A1

MAYOR: I only hope that the Senate will be able to protect me. PHOTO BY [illegible]

nation money from asset spoliation cases, local and police officials were to coordinate under the current administration than jueteng operations needed to rig their draws to satisfy the demands of the corrupt government.

"The victims here are the jueteng and lotteries drivers, the vendors, the farmers (who bet their women)," he said.

An innocent past

Mayor knows his numbers well, particularly cash flow principles, having obtained an accounting degree from the Divine Word Christian College in Albay.

He then got administrative experience when he served as an employee at the Bureau of Air Transportation. He also worked in the private sector as a junior examiner with Pacific Banking Corp. until the mid-1980s.

Mayor said he became a licensed contractor in 1986 and still engaged in the business every now and then.

In 1994, he was elected barangay chair of Dapao in Daraga, where his family has a home in St. Mary's Village.

A year after, he plunged into the underground lottery racket.

P1M for a start

"We'd been planning to go into jueteng as early as 1992," Mayor said in his Senate testimony.

In response to senators' questions, Mayor said he and his partners—Tomas Rubiola and Lou Marcelo—started operating jueteng in Albay in 1995. Eventually, Rubiola and Marcelo quit, leaving Mayor as the lone jueteng operator in Albay.

"Some think that starting jueteng operations requires a huge amount. But when a place is open and the protection money being asked is relatively small, one can start operations with just P1 million [to pay off officials asking for advance protection money]," he said.

Mayor said there were times when he earned a windfall from his illegal operations but that there were also times when he suffered losses.

"In 1997, we stopped operations because [then Interior Secretary] Robert Barbers was hot on jueteng operations," he said.

Launching a comeback

"I left [an] deal time because I was paying installments for a parcel of land I bought," he said.

Starting in 1998 until President Joseph Estrada was deposed in 2001, Mayor said he didn't engage in jueteng.

He said he made his jueteng comeback after President Macapagal-Arroyo came to power as Estrada's successor.

And he came back strong.

Mayor said he took over the nearly-kaput operations in Sorsogon in 2003. A year later, he hit Baguio City and Benguet.

Another dream

"I was able to get [new areas] because I offered a larger amount. In Sorsogon, the monthly protection money there was just P300,000. I offered the bagman P600,000. I got the operations," Mayor said.

While he would not say he was a big fish in the jueteng pond, Mayor counted alleged jueteng lords, like Modesto Catalan, Rodolfo "Boy" Pineda, Benguet Gov. Bernardo Vangdon and Sorsy Lajara, as among his stiff competitors.

There was a close line operations in Albay alone grossed P90 million a month, he said.

On Dec. 31, 2003, however, a different dream turned sour, he wanted to be mayor of Daraga.

Old world game

After losing the election, there was no longer any jueteng operations to protect.

A jueteng bagman's lodger showed that Pineda had taken over his pool on strongarm. Even his former jueteng henchmen had been reportedly deployed by Representative Imelda to by Pineda, who hails from Lobon, Davao.

"I only hope that the Senate will be able to protect me. There are even operators in Bicol who are already angry with me," Mayor said.

"Among the members of my family, only me can know that [it] be watching," he said.

Testimony mostly hearsay, say senators

By TJ Burgonio

SOME senators yesterday opened with skepticism the testimony of confessed "jueteng" lord Wilfredo "Boy Sinol" Mayor on the web of corruption surrounding operations of the illegal numbers game in some parts of the country but others found it credible.

Mayor testified before the Senate that it was usual for him to pay off governors, congressmen and mayors, through their "bag men," to allow jueteng in Albay, Pangasinan and Baguio City.

He, however, admitted that he had no "hard evidence" to show that the monthly payoffs amounting to millions of pesos, had ended up in the pockets of these officials.

"As of now he has no personal knowledge, he admitted he was just talking from circumstances ... So everything he's saying is a conclusion of fact, not a statement of fact," Senate President Franklin Drilon said.

Minority Floor Leader Francis Pangilinan and Senators Juan Ponce Enrile and Jinggoy Estrada agreed.

"It's mostly hearsay so far. I hope that the second hearing will veer away from hearsay toward credible evidence, be it circumstantial, direct or [illegible], who searched the proceedings in the room.

"There is much, much, much to be desired in the testimony. He knows the operation because he was involved, but whether those people that he mentioned received what he claimed he gave by way of payola or bribes is a big question mark," Enrile said.

Senators Ramon "Ting" Larnon and Jinggoy Estrada found the testimony credible and damaging.

"He's [Mayor] credible enough. His testimony was equally credible. There were details that only a gambling operator, only a credible witness, could have testified on. It's hard to locate names, places and circumstances," Larnon said.

For Senators, he cited Mayor's claim that he had managed to take over jueteng operations in Benguet after agreeing to give a monthly payoff of P600,000 to then Pangasinan Governor Jr. Miguel Aberasturi through his "bagman," identified as Arthur "Cesar" Nagtali.

Madrigal said she had no reason to doubt the testimony despite Mayor's admission that he had no personal knowledge of where the payoffs ended up.

"It's very hard to put a good man down. Definitely the testimony of Mr. Mayor is very damaging because I believe [Lingayen-Dagupan] Bishop [Oscar] will not bring to the public someone who is not telling the truth," she said.

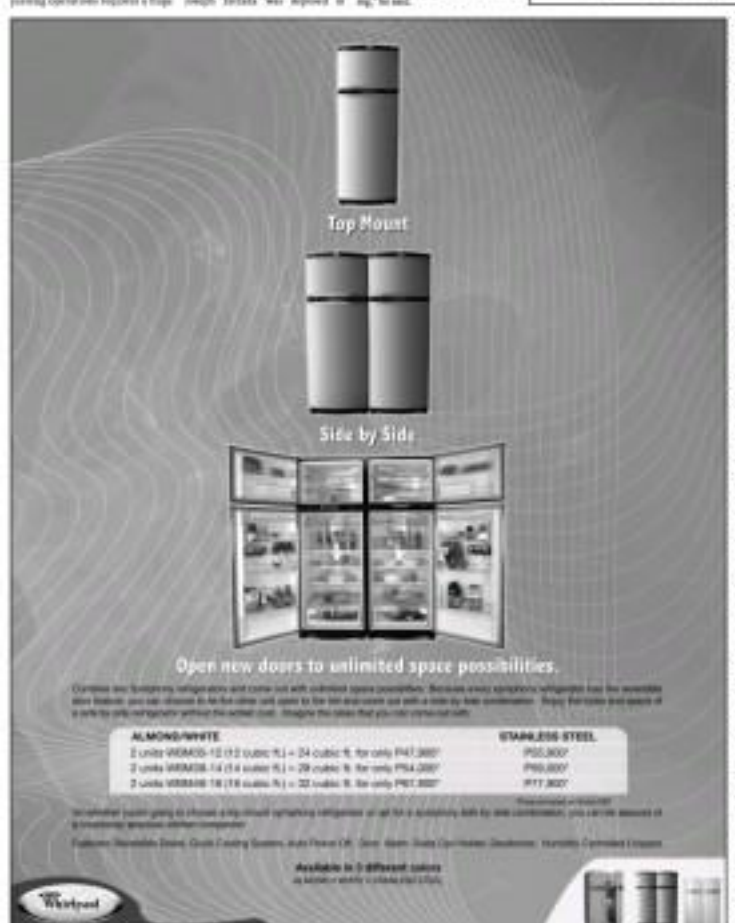
Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr., for his part, said it was "a good start" and if the testimony would be corroborated by other witnesses, the Senate could build a "circumstantial web of linkage" of jueteng protectors operating.

"Taken by itself, the testimony ... may not suffice, but connected with other testimonies about which he speaks of, they can create a web of circumstantial evidence to link people to the jueteng[ue]," he said.

Drilon, Pimentel and Sen. Manuel Villar Jr. said the "bagmen" mentioned by Mayor should be summoned to the next hearing so they could shed light on his testimony.

Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago said the value of Mayor's testimony lay "[in the light it sheds] on the issue of whether we should legalize jueteng or not."

"According to him, it is very easy to maintain jueteng. And since the main basis for advocacy of legalization is that it is possible to eradicate, then that is a very significant statement from the field—that eradicating it can be done with sufficient political will," she said.



Gov't hospital officials ...

From page A1

said. "I would not totally rule out the possibility that some of those cases were happening."

But Leonardo and De la Paz said the hospital never tolerated doctors and nurses who would give patients a tongue lashing, even if the staff members were unfortunately "overworked and underpaid."

Never an excuse

"That's never an excuse," Leonardo said. "We always introduce to them the value of health care and service."

In spite of an insufficient budget, Isinlig handles as many as 80 obstetric cases daily, according to De la Paz, a member of the obstetrics-gynecology staff.

One of the seniors said the hospital dealt with as many as 15 pregnant mothers in labor at any given time during the "peak season," which is usually in September.

"Still, we never say this as a justification," De la Paz said. "We never allow our people to mistreat patients even if sometimes it is [so large] humanly impossible to accommodate so many patients at a given time."

The sources said they had witnessed mothers in labor being berated by some doctors and nurses, allegedly insisting that those "personally pregnant" women should resort to artificial birth control methods.

Some residents may have lashed out at patients, because of sheer exhaustion and ignorance of proper bedside manners, according to De la Paz.

New trainees

"You have to understand that some of them may just be first year [trainees] and they still don't know proper decorum," she reasoned out. "Still, it's not an excuse."

De la Paz said the hospital was now looking into the reported conduct unbecoming by members of the hospital staff.

She said she and her colleagues were particularly concerned about the purported case of one male doctor who removed a pregnant woman's uterus after delivery without her consent.

The doctor allegedly did so to make sure that the mother, who had just delivered her sixth baby, would not become pregnant again, according to one of the sources.

"We're very concerned," De la Paz said.

She said the hospital would have to gather more evidence so it could impose disciplinary action on the erring doctors. She said those who had verbally abused patients would also be disciplined.

The former nursing trainee said he had witnessed another doctor performing dilation and curettage or vagus on a pregnant mother in her 20s. She said the woman simply wanted to get rid of the baby because she had a job waiting in Japan.

Asked about these cases, Leonardo said the hospital was "trying to maintain a certain standard."

"We follow certain protocols and we try to give our patients the best care," he said.

Dichavez owned bank account, says Pimentel

By Helen F Flores

SENATE Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. yesterday testified in the impeachment trial that controversial Jose 'Butch' Ilarde account was created not by deposed President Joseph Estrada but by businessman Jaime Dichavez.

Pimentel, the 11th witness presented by the 11-10 vote by the senator-judges to open the impeachment trial against Estrada that the conviction of the second envelope that was not opened during the Senate impeachment trial of the former president showed that Dichavez owned the Ilarde account.

Pimentel said the envelope contained a 22-page document, including a letter signed by Dichavez to Equitable Bank senior vice president Raimundo Dy Teng.

Dichavez, in the letter dated Aug. 25, 1999, directed Dy-Teng to open two bank accounts under the name Jose Velarde in the Ayala Lima, Binondo, branch of Equitable Bank and to transact all businesses under the account name with him.

The letter was deposited with Senate Secretary Lutgarda Barbers on Jan. 18, 2005, immediately after the impeachment trial was stopped following the walkout of the prosecution panel.

The sufficient vote prompted by the 11-10 vote by the senator-judges to open the second envelope against Estrada that the conviction of the second envelope that was not opened during the Senate impeachment trial of the former president showed that Dichavez owned the Vel

4 killed in plane crash

By Nikko Dizon

A TWIN-ENGINE Beechcraft BE-58C aircraft crashed yesterday morning shortly after taking off from the Cesar Aguirre Airport in Palanan, killing all four people on board, including the pilot.

The Air Transportation Office (ATO) identified the fatalities as Capt. Edelita Aguevidar, the pilot, Ilon Sui, Diego, a passenger, and Victor Sulex and Harry Colcapacho, the plane's mechanics.

The plane took off No. 3D CD64 and turned by Bound for Ilagan but was bound for Manila.

It took off at 11:20 a.m. and crashed in a mountainous mountain area less than 10 minutes later, Assistant Secretary Eric Apacible, ATO chief.

Apacible said the eight-seater plane was among those that were grounded after inspection following the crash of a Cessna plane on May 17 in Morong, Bataan, that killed its pilot.

Last Friday, the Beechcraft was inspected by airworthiness at the ATO hangar in Manila and was cleared for flying, Apacible said.

It left Manila for Palanan on Saturday.

Senior Supt. Victor Corrupio, operations chief of the Philippine National Police Metropolitan office, citing field office reports, said the plane's scheduled flight in Manila last weekend was suspended after it experienced engine trouble.

Corrupio said the plane's mechanics Colcapado and Sulex spent all day Sunday repairing the plane's engines.

But initial investigation revealed that just minutes after takeoff, one of the plane's engines died. Then it fell," Corrupio told the local press in Filipino.

He said the plane was used to transport live fish from Cagayan to Manila.

ATO aviation safety investigators were dispatched to the crash site to determine the cause of the accident, Dizon said.

This was the sixth general aviation aircraft crash this year, he added.

Five of the crashes, including yesterday's, happened in May while another occurred in March. A total of 111 people were killed in the May crashes alone. Three were the survivors.

Dizon said the Inquirer provides that following the consecutive crashes, the ATO has begun monitoring all general aviation aircraft with respect to "the cost of this matter."

"We are doubling our efforts. That's all we can do," Dizon said.

With Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

FOR A FREE BURMA

Fr. Robert Reyes leads cyclists from the Malacañang Reservation in Quezon City to Mendiola Bridge in Manila in a "Bike for Burma (Myanmar) Protest" sponsored by Free Burma Coalition-Philippines to commemorate the May 30, 2003, "Depayin Massacre" in Northern Burma where scores of political activists were killed and wounded. MYLA CRUZ

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Low Dose CT Lung Cancer Screening involves a quick scan of your chest and lungs to reveal abnormalities not seen using conventional chest x-ray. Six to seven images, the procedure is conducted using a low level of CT radiation dose. The screening test effectively detects lung cancer before it can spread to other parts of the body and becomes difficult to treat.

St. Luke's Medical Center is committed to provide patients with the tools that could give them much higher chances of survival. With the Low Dose CT Lung Cancer Screening, lung cancer would hopefully cease to be the country's main cause of cancer death in the near future.

And now, more! Some nodules will require repeat chest CTs over a 2 year period. The detection of abnormalities or nodules may cause uncomfortable anxiety. Positive diagnostics or assessments are necessary to determine if the lesions are benign or cancerous. However, the advantage of early detection far outweighs this discomfort and dread.

St. Luke's Medical Center

St. Luke's Medical Center is the only participating member from the Philippines in the International Early Lung Cancer Action Program (I-ELCAP), a worldwide study group led by New York-Presbyterian / Weill Cornell Medical College of Cornell University.

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More college dropouts seen

By Alcuin Papa

POOR students who are leaving private colleges and universities in droves for more affordable state institutions may find it hard to get into the cheaper schools because these are already overcrowded.

Because of this, the militant youth group Anak ng Bayan Youth Party said yesterday that college students hoping to enroll in state universities and colleges (SUCs) may have no chance but to drop out of school this year.

Raymond Palatino, party vice president, said there were not enough SUCs to handle the number of tuitionless from private higher education institutions (HEIs). In addition, Palatino said, enrollment slots in SUCs were limited and these schools were also raising their tuition and other fees.

As a result, Palatino predicted an increase in the number of college dropouts and out-of-school youth over the next few years.

"Access to public HEIs, the last resort for students who want to obtain a college degree, has become impossible for many college hopefuls. While it is true that SUCs offer lower tuition [compared to] private schools, educational expenditures in state schools and universities have seen the biggest increases in recent years, thus making them also inaccessible to ordinary students," he said.

Already, Palatino said, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) National Commission of the Philippines reported a measly 22 percent overall student survival rate from the first to the fourth year of college. In June 2004, the Wallace Report revealed that the college dropout rate was at a staggering all-time high of 73 percent.

The situation is aggravated by the low priority that government places on state education as manifested by the constant reduction in the education budget and the reduction in the number of public tertiary schools in the country, Palatino said. From 271 in 1986, the number of schools in the college level was down to 173 by 2003.

Palatino also said SUCs were forced to accept a limited number of students due to financial constraints.

Last year, the University of the Philippines Office of Admissions said some 64,000 high school graduates all over the country applied to take the UP College Admission Test, with 40,000 of them wanting to enter UP Diliman alone, the university's flagship campus. Only about 11,000 applicants are admitted to UP each year.

The same goes for the Polytechnic University of the Philippines where about 50,000 to 80,000 students take the PUP College Entrance Test, but only 10,000 are admitted.

In recent years, Palatino said tuition and miscellaneous fees at SUCs had risen with the adoption of a tuition scheme similar to the Socialized Tuition Fee Adjustment Program implemented at UP in 1989.

Under the program, tuition at UP shot up by nearly 300 percent, from P15 to P300 per unit today. This scheme is also being implemented in public technical and vocational schools in the country.

6 Sinos turn out to be illegals

THE CLAIM of six Chinese nationals that they were innocent of drug charges was not enough to get them off the hook after their alibi that they were running a hardware store was found to be a violation of immigration laws.

The six are detained at the Bureau of Immigration and face deportation for allegedly working illegally and overstaying in the Philippines.

BI prosecutor Jaime Licas said the Chinese's claim that they were running a hardware store made them liable for working without the proper permits.

They were also found to be overstaying since 2001, which is grounds for their summary deportation, Licas said.

The six were identified as William Chua, Henry Tan, Tyson Li, Joseph Tan, Wang Jun Lin and Johnny Chua.

They were arrested on May 24 in a raid of their rented house in Barangay Pinyahan, Valenzuela City, according to Immigration Commissioner Alipio Fernandez.

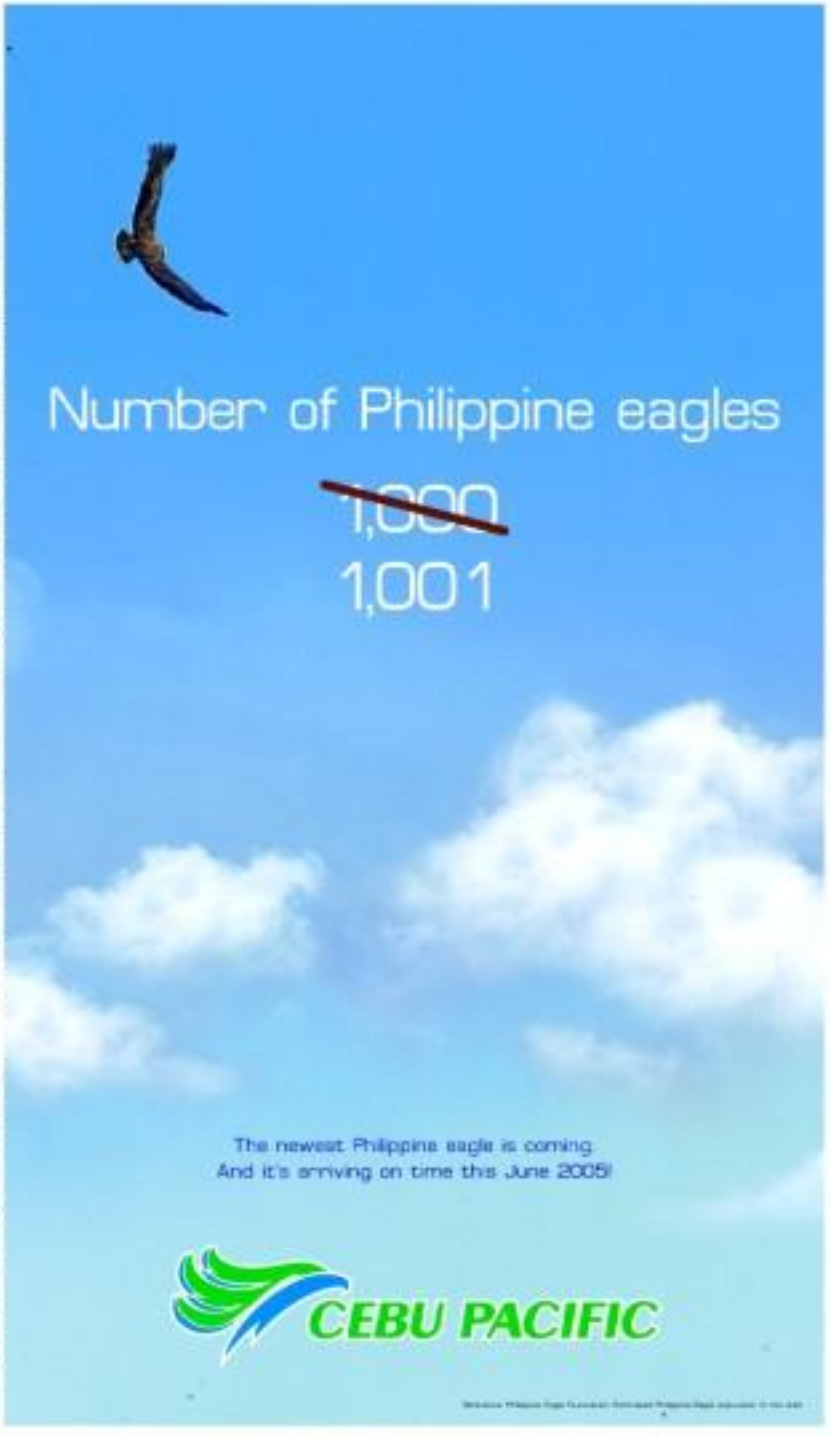
Agents of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency conducted the raid on suspicion that the Chinese were involved in illegal drugs.

Seized during the raid were fake hardware items that the foreigners claimed had been imported from China. The PDEA claimed the hardware business was just a front for the Chinese nation als' illegal drug operations.

After their arrest, the Chinese denied they were involved in illegal drugs.

The authorities, meanwhile, destroyed yesterday some P2.4 billion of dangerous drugs, bringing to P15.7 billion the value of illegal drugs destroyed since 2002, the PDEA said.

The drugs – which included some 421 kilos of methamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu, 29 kilos of marijuana and 1,953 kilos of the shabu precursor ephedrine – were burned at a waste plant in Barangay Aguado in Trece Martires City. Arlie B. Sidaverria and Lodge A. del Puerto



Albay solons, Batangas gov deny 'jueteng' raps

OFFICIALS implicated by "jueteng" whistle-blower Wilfredo Mayor at the start of a Senate inquiry angrily denied yesterday they had received payoffs from illegal numbers game operators.

"I don't know it, I deny it," was the simple reaction, via a text message, of Albay Rep. Joey Salceda (2nd dist.).

The Bicolano tried to contact former Albay Rep. Abiel Lagman-Lantoria (first district), but her father Rep. Abiel Lagman said she was in the United States pursuing higher studies on a Fulbright scholarship.

"I have already come out in the open to pledge my cooperation in the ongoing investigation, although I am convinced that it is a politically motivated witch-hunt being instigated by those with an axe to grind against the present administration," said Batangas Gov. Armando Sanchez in a statement.

The governor dismissed Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. for insinuating that some local officials linked to jueteng, like Sanchez, were now planning to leave the country "to give the noise time to cool off."

Presumption of innocence

On Saturday, Pimentel asked to revise Secretary Angelo Reyes not to allow local officials implicated in the jueteng scandal to go abroad.

"I presume that (senator Pimentel) who has a reputation as a freedom fighter, knows all about the presumption of innocence and the right to travel, which are both enshrined in the Bill of Rights of the Constitution," said Presidential Deputy Sanchez's legal counsel.

Rapacio said it was frustrating for Pimentel, "to suggest that evil men, against whom not a single iota of evidence has been presented, should be denied the same rights that he fought hard for during martial law."

Sanchez admitted that he would be leaving for Japan in the first week of June. He said his trip was sponsored by the Regional Development Council of the Calabarzon region and the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry and was scheduled as early as June to months ago.

He said the cancellation of his trip would cause the country to...

...national embarrassment and grave consequences for his countrymen.

"I am not afraid to face Senator Pimentel, the committee on games and amusements, and any of those screaming me of any illegal activity anytime, anywhere. I have done nothing wrong, and I have nothing to hide," Sanchez said. Marlon Ramos and Job R. Bebon, PDI Southern Luzon bureau

Witness tags Mikey in 'jueteng' payola

Transcript p. A1

Mikey pals deny bagman role

TWO FELIXES of Pampanga Rep. Mikey Arroyo yesterday denied allegations that they acted as bagmen for the President's son.

Cpl. Engracio Reno Magbanua, 39, and erstwhile Gov. Leo Rafaelak, 53, said they did not know confessed "jueteng" operator Wilfredo "Boy" Mayor, said that their names were being dragged into the jueteng controversy to destroy Arroyo's reputation.

"I have nothing to do with jueteng. I never met that guy (Mayor). That was the first time that I heard his name," Magbanua said.

Rafaelak said he is my friend and I'm flattered, my name is being dragged to destroy the reputations of Congressman Arroyo and that of the governor. I'm saddened.

But the part, Rafaelak said he got to know Arroyo since they both lived in La Vista Subdivision in Quezon City. He said he denied being Arroyo's bagman.

"You know, I was just caught completely by surprise when I heard about this. When I heard about this, I was stunned. I have absolutely no knowledge or anything about this issue," Rafaelak said.

He appealed to Arroyo's critics not to drag his name into the controversy, adding that he was innocent.

"In my profession, if your name is destroyed, that's it. Your whole career goes down the drain," Rafaelak said. *Philip Salvosa*

Lumibao, in reply, told the senators: "I do not recall hearing nor the witness, your honor."

He said the Pangasinan house was his parents' and this whenever he went there, he was just like any ordinary citizen following the people.

Mayor said the regional assessment got P400,000 a week, while P200,000 a week was given for the provincial command, P200,000 a month for the Camp Crame, P200,000 a month for the media in Manila, P400,000 a month for local media, the NBI in Manila got P500,000 a month, the intelligence group in Camp P.D. 1009 a month, and DILG operations, P500,000 a month.

Mayor said the payola for Camp Crame was received from him by Gener Ilarde, alias Boy Tangkad, at the Chevy hotels.

"Sometimes I gave it to him as soon as he lands, sometimes he assisted it in cash," he said.

He said Boy Tangkad asked for cash when the jueteng issue had become hot and when the anniversary bombing law was enacted.

Mayor also said Governor Lumibao sought a meeting with him at the hastings hotel in Manila. In fact he could not go in Manila so they talked over the phone.

"Can you help me there because I want to organize an Albay?" he quoted Lumibao as saying.

Mayor repeatedly stressed that he had no evidence directly linking the President's son and others to the jueteng operations but that he never transacted in person but through bagmen or intermediaries.

Won't stand in court

But he said the fact that he was able to freely operate in the areas where he paid protection money was enough proof. He conceded, however, this could not stand in court.

"I'm gambling, we operate by word of honor," he said.

Mayor said he normally asked for a five-day "tiyo run" after making an agreement on jueteng payoffs with money. He said the last time he asked for it was when he moved or stopped during the five-day tiyo run and afterwards proved that they had really brought payment in.

Mayor claimed some of the police task units were created to serve like "a secret police" staged "to create people from Ano-Ano (television network) news coverage."

Fears for family

He also contended that some of the names on a supposed police list of people arrested were actually names of "people already...

...in the cemetery."

Before making his revelations, Mayor expressed to senators his fears for his and his family's security, not just from prosecution but from physical harm.

"I am very vulnerable and I'm sure my family and I will be finished," Mayor said.

Subpoena dismissed Mayor's assurance that he had received assuring words through a certain "Jojo."

"I am not sure who Jojo is and if that," he said in a text message.

Lagman denial

Rep. Edcel Lagman, speaking in behalf of his daughter, said Mayor's claim was a "conspiracy theory."

"This is utterly false, baseless, and malevolently orchestrated. This is too much. It puts the human rights daughter in my craft spot," he said.

Lagman said his daughter had been in the United States for the last 10 months and had not finished a special post-graduate course on public health policies at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, under a Fulbright scholarship.

He said he had campaigned against jueteng and that his daughter pursued this vigorously during her two terms from 1998 to 2004.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, May 31, 2005
Feast of the Visitation

1st Reading: Zep 3:14-18
Gospel: Luke 1:39-56

Mary rises on our rite a scene in the Hills of Judah. She received the Savior of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. Hence Elizabeth, Mary's greeting, the baby leapt in her womb. Elizabeth was filled with holy spirit, and giving a loud cry, said, "You are most blessed among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb! From it is that the mother of our Lord would come to me?" The moment your greeting sounded in my ears, the baby within me suddenly leapt for joy. Blessed are you who believed that the Lord's word would come true!" And Mary said:

"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my savior!

He has looked upon his servant in her lowliness, and people from here will call me blessed.

The Mighty One has done great things for me: Holy is his Name!

From age to age his mercy extends to those who live in his presence.

He has acted with power and done wonders, and scattered the proud with their plans.

He has put down the mighty from their thrones and lifted up those who are downtrodden.

He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.

He held out his hand to Israel, his servant, for he remembered his mercy, even as he promised our fathers, Abraham and his descendants forever."

Mary remained with Elizabeth about three months and then returned home.

Commentary:

Here is new spring, we spring forward into the secret ways of God coming to earth! In this Marian-filled meeting into the new life that all will celebrate seven months from now. Mary has been visited by Gabriel and said the deed is promised well the Word of God made flesh. Now she goes to visit her cousin Elizabeth sending seven time on a single, unmarried woman for a matter that would have seemed her and her child to death. She sends Elizabeth's anniversary and knowledge and will be one of the first believers when she hands John, the great Elizabeth. Shalom. Peace be with you! And the sound of the words of God stirs John into life and stirs Elizabeth to prophesy and blessing of Mary. The Word is coming out into the world and the good, the corrupt, the servants of believers overcoming proof are the only ones to pick up on its presence growing in Mary. Mary is blessed by Elizabeth and she in turn blesses God. He Word is made flesh in her life and we are to go forth to grow others with the Word they grow with and to be ready to visit another in obedience as Elizabeth and Mary in her becoming a disciple of His Word.

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GMA slams opposition over smear campaign

Transcript p. A1

Our said those charges should be answered: "If we are to clear (the air and move on."

His lawyers refused to answer reporters' questions on whether she would encourage her husband to answer the accusations, saying she had "nothing more to elaborate."

Asked whether her services could help the opposition mount a change in the relations ship between the administration and the opposition, the President said this should not be the case, especially as she goes into the second stage of her economic program.

Guard against innuendo

"I think it's very important as we do implementation to have our Philippines, a united country," she declared, "And, therefore, it's important to point out that he has long, we'd been having two Philippines. One that is about what's good about our country and the one that is not good; one that seeks to build and the other one that seeks to destroy."

In Malacañang, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye did not react to Arroyo's briefing yesterday but issued a statement about two hours into the Senate inquiry.

Bunye said the administration hoped the investigation would shed light on the controversy. He also said "care should be taken against character assassination by innuendo."

Malacañang supports the Senate and House inquiries into jueteng and Mayor's other allegations of illegal activities, Bunye said. *Report from Christine O. Avendaño*

3 police execs sacked over 'jueteng'

THE PHILIPPINE National Police yesterday sacked three police officials because of persistent reports of "jueteng" operations in their areas.

PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao relieved Senior Supt. Arnold Revilla, chief of the Batangas provincial police; Supt. Sandra Ilani, chief of Sorsogon town, and Chief Insp. Cecilio Villas Jr., chief of Bislig, Camarines Sur.

Revilla was replaced by Supt. Federico Rocio Irurita and Ilani by Chief Insp. Holly Agra Jacinto. Insp. Macedonio Mota replaced Villas.

In a statement, the PNP said it had ordered close to 3,000 persons in its anti-jueteng campaign from March 16 to May 30.

It said 753 operations had been conducted and 1,000 cases filed in court during the period.

Lodge A. del Puerto

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo and her brother-in-law, Rep. Ignacio "Iggy" Arroyo, attend the inauguration of the public market in Tuguegarao City in Cagayan Province. CAPITOL PHOTO

Metro Manila workers get P25 daily wage increase

By Jovanie Aning

METRO Manila workers will receive a P25 increase in their basic pay effective June 16, the Department of Labor and Employment announced yesterday.

DOLE National Capital Region Director Ruben Macaraeg, who sits as the chair of the NCR wage board, said Metro Manila workers would now get a daily basic pay of P275 ... an increase of 10 percent — in addition to the P90 cost-of-living allowance (COLA) that they are currently receiving.

The National Wages and Productivity Commission, meanwhile, approved wage increases in other regions yesterday.

NWPC Executive Director Cirilaco Lapuz said 88 coal-fired workers would receive a P35 COLA increase, while those in the Eastern Visayas would have their P11 COLA integrated into their basic pay and would get another P11 COLA.

Installment

In Region III or Mimaropa, workers will get P20 more in basic pay to be given in two installments.

On Friday, the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Boards in Central Luzon and the Cordilleras increased the COLA in those areas to P30. In Central Visayas, the RTWPB raised the basic pay by P15 in Bohol, Cebu and Negros Oriental.

As expected, militant workers were displeased with the amounts of increase of their COLAs, saying they were not enough to cope with the high cost of living.

The Kilusang Mayo Uno called the COLA hikes "worthless," while the Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino described them as "unreal."

"It is not enough. It's not only an insult to the workers' fight for substantial wages. How can the government expect workers to cope with the upcoming Oct. 1 hikes, power rate increase and the rollouts of additional value-added taxes on the prices of basic goods and services?" KMU chair Elmer Labog said.

Protest

Petitioners to round their Pentecostal Group urged various labor groups in wage consultative "series-the-nation work protest" in response to what he termed was "the unlawful alliance" between the President, the labor department, wage boards and big business groups.

"This is far from our demand and our needs, especially with the increasing cost of goods and public utilities as P20 is not even enough for a little while," Diwap said.

"The increase in COLA is not a wage increase, but an economic and political payback engineered in a few gross. Actually, what the RTWPBs did was an ultimate

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On your retirement, we wish you Godspeed!

The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Gozon

France dumps EU Charter, plunging Europe into crisis

PARIS—French voters massively rejected the EU's first-ever constitution Sunday dealing a slap in the face to President Jacques Chirac and a potentially fatal setback to the continent's ambitious plans for deeper political union.

"No one—a European at heart—this is a profound disappointment," said Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin, likely to be the first political victim of the treaty's rejection.

Final results from the interior ministry early Monday put the "no" vote at 54.87 percent. That result had been predicted, but the wide margin of victory deepened a sense of crisis across the European Union.

Turnout was high, at about 70 percent, reflecting the intensity of the national debate.

Defense Minister Michèle Alliot-Marie called for the result "a defeat for France and a defeat for Europe."

Chirac appeared on national television to "take note" of the constitution's rejection.

He said he would continue to speak out for France in the EU, but added: "Let us make no mistake, France's decision inevitably creates a difficult context for the defense of our interests."

Confirming predictions that he would subsequently fire Cabinet, Chirac said an announcement would be made in the coming days, with Raffarin's dismissal widely expected.

The result was a crushing blow to the 72-year-old president, who put his authority on the line with three televised appeals for a "yes" vote—warning that rejection would marginalize France's voice in Europe and do nothing to safeguard its generous social model.

Instead the public was swayed by fears that the treaty would destroy the country's welfare system, hurt new growers in southern France and shift jobs to low-cost economies of eastern Europe.

The rejection opened up a period of deep political uncertainty inside the EU, as the countries look ahead to be unified by all 25 members.

In Brussels, Luxembourg Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker, whose country currently holds the rotating EU presidency, insisted that the treaty—which theoretically requires approval of all 25 EU member states—was not dead.

"The process of ratification must continue in the other countries," he told reporters after the Brussels French "hour."

By creating the posts of EU president and foreign minister and streamlining the process of decision-making in an enlarged bloc, the treaty's 448 articles are intended to build the region more as a time of intensifying global competition.

So far nine countries have approved the constitution and the rest aim to continue the procedure up to a deadline of October 2006, but it is unclear how the text can survive now that it has been ruled in one of the EU's six founder members and half of the key Franco-German axis.

European leaders fear the French "no" could have a domino effect in other countries planning to hold referendums—first of all the Netherlands which has a non-binding survey of ever on Wednesday.

The French president—who marked 10 years in office earlier this month—ignored calls for his resignation, instead hinting he would dismiss the unpopular Raffarin in the coming days. AFP

"NO" vote supporters celebrate after France voted against the ratification of the European Constitution, Paris, May 29. France overwhelmingly rejected the European Union's Constitution in a referendum on Sunday dealing a potentially fatal blow to a charter designed to make the enlarged bloc run smoothly. REUTERS

Five reasons for 'No' vote

PARIS—Here are some reasons given by "No" voters and political analysts on explanations why France rejected the EU constitution:

- High unemployment: Voters say they are angry about persistently high unemployment, which is now over 10 percent. They say French and EU leaders are out of touch with voters and have not done enough to tackle the country's economic problems.
- Free-market economic policies: Critics say the constitution enshrines a pro-market economic model which puts business interests ahead of social concerns.

They say it would not protect workers enough and would drive firms out of France to states with lower wages and rules in eastern Europe.

- Enlargement: The "No" camp fears French influence will decline inside the bloc as the constitution strips countries of more sovereign rights and moves power to Brussels.
- Immigration issues: Leading opponents of the treaty said a "No" vote could force the European Union to renegotiate the constitution and include more safeguards for European workers. EU leaders and advocates of the treaty in France have said this is now impossible.
- Turkey: Some voters fear the constitution paves the way for Turkey to enter the EU and the referendum on it may be their only opportunity to oppose such a move. *Reuters*

Double suicide attack kills 25 as Baghdad clampdown tightens

KILLA, Iraq—A double suicide attack killed at least 25 people south of Baghdad on Monday as insurgents struck back against a massive operation by Iraq its top to restore security to the capital.

"We have 25 killed and 100 wounded," said Hilla hospital director Mohammed Dhia, adding that all the casualties were former police commandos.

"The attack was carried out by two suicide bombers wearing explosives belts," spokesmen said.

The early morning blasts in Hilla, 100 km south of Baghdad, targeted a crowd of around 500 former members who had reportedly lost their jobs and income in the purge.

In February, a bomb in the same town killed 110 people.

Insurgent attacks nationwide have killed around 700 people this month, following the swearing-in of Iraq's first democratically elected post-Saddam government.

On Sunday a series of car bombings in and around Baghdad—reportedly masterminded by al-Qaeda's dire Musab al-Zarqawi—killed 26 people, most of them security forces, and wounded 87 others in Iraq's oldest homegrown clampdown since the fall of Saddam Hussein over two years ago.

"Squadrons and brigades directed by the cherish of the majahedeen Abu Musab al-Zarqawi on Sunday launched an operation ... planned and supervised by our leader," said an Internet statement allowed in his group.

"The operation, it said, was a reply to the "allowed mass-criminal plan in Baghdad announced by the Iraqi ministries of defense and interior," a reference to the security ops reported to involve up to 40,000 Iraqi security forces that was launched the same day.

It was not possible to verify the authenticity of the statement, the latest in a series of sometimes contradictory messages about the health of the Jordanian-born militant and his role in the insurgency.

Nevertheless, the government claimed it had already captured hundreds of insurgents.

Search operations and raids have allowed us to arrest 300 people and find arms caches in several houses," spokesperson Laith Kubba said on Sunday.

He added: "We are expecting results in a series of operations. Starting messages about the health of the Jordanian-born militant and his role in the insurgency.

Nevertheless, the government claimed it had already captured hundreds of insurgents.

Search operations and raids have allowed us to arrest 300 people and find arms caches in several houses," spokesperson Laith Kubba said on Sunday.

He added: "We are expecting results in the next few days." AFP

Corruption bigger threat than terror, says Indonesia

JAKARTA—Indonesia's anti-corruption chief says graft is a bigger threat to the country than terrorism and he vowed to pursue cases of the banking industry while keeping a clear eye on key state companies.

But Taufiequrachman Ruki, head of the Anti-Corruption Commission (KPK), said his 18-month old agency was badly stretched by its aggressive probe into the election commission that 70 percent of his staff were working on.

"Corruption is a kind of terrorism. Corruption kills and makes more people despair than other forms of terrorism," Ruki, a retired police general, told Reuters in an interview on Monday.

"I believe that terrorism in this republic is caused by this incompetence," he added, referring to cases where suspected terrorists were released from jail because of graft.

Bombings blamed on militants linked to al-Qaida have hit the world's most populous Muslim nation in recent years, but graft often tops opinion polls as the thing most bothersome domestically.

Global graft watchdog Transparency International lists Indonesia as the world's fifth most corrupt country, a statistic that has hindered efforts to attract foreign investment.

"The government and the majority of people have realized that without cleaning up corruption, we shouldn't expect investment to come," said Ruki.

"That's why Cinq-investors and governments in many countries, very serious," he said, naming President Yushi Susilo bang Yudhoyono's war on graft was not just rhetoric.

Yudhoyono, who is close to Ruki, took power last year promising "shock therapy" in fighting graft.

He has supported the KPK, which has the power to make arrests, take over investigations from the police and which works in tandem with a special anti-corruption court that was established in 2003 to fast-track sensitive graft cases.

In April the court passed its first verdict, jailing the governor of Aceh province for 10 years on corruption charges related to the purchase of a chartered jet in 2001.

KPK's biggest case so far involves a probe into the election commission, a body comprised largely of respected academics which was praised for organizing last year's landmark elections.

Four officials have been arrested, including the chief, in a case that centers on alleged kickbacks paid by firms that were contracted to supply materials for the polls.

The case showed just how bad the system was in Indonesia and highlighted the temptation to abuse power, Ruki said. Reuters

ORANG Queen known as Rikki showing her's during the 9th annual gay parade in Sao Paulo May 29.

Press freedom deteriorating, newspaper association told

BEIJING—Press freedom is deteriorating worldwide and freedom of expression is under siege in many countries, the World Association of Newspapers said Sunday ahead of Asia's largest-ever gathering of media executives.

"The press is simply muzzled in many countries," said a report from the WAN board, meeting on the eve of the 58th World News paper Congress and the World Editors Forum.

"Attacks on journalists are common. Too many killers of journalists remain free.

"A total of 38 journalists have been killed since November 2004, thirdwide more have been arrested, assaulted and harassed."

The report said that in the past six months, the Philippines and Iraq were the most deadly places for the media, with a total of 15 journalists killed in both places.

The report also targeted some state regimes throughout the world which repress freedom of expression.

"The suffocation of independent media continues unabated in countries throughout the world," said the report.

"The governments of Nepal, Cuba, Belarus, Turkmenistan, Eritrea, China and Zimbabwe, to name only a few of the worst offenders, have refused to surrender their monopoly on information, finding more and more sophisticated mechanisms to maintain their stranglehold on media."

Investigative journalists challenging some of these regimes told the congress, at a four-day discussion, of the risks and sometimes fatal dangers of their work.

Chinese journalist Gao Qinghong, suspended from his position as managing editor of China's 21st Century World Herald in March 2003, said that rewarding Chinese reporters were trying to tell both the foundations of state control.

"We never know how far we can go," he told the roundtable forum held at the opening of the Congress.

"In China, if you come up with a good story, the government will ask you to stop writing for a while."

Kavi Chongkittavorn, executive editor of The Nation in Bangkok, and Asian journalists needed to speak with one voice to promote press freedom.

"There has been no progress in setting up a regional human rights mechanism," he said.

"We have not really got together to making common cause and that is our weakness. We only talk about our economic progress. Southeast Asian journalists and Asian journalists must get together to have this common problem."

About 1,000 participants from more than 80 countries are taking part in the World Newspaper Congress and the simultaneous World Editors Forum, Asia's largest ever gathering of international media executives, according to the organizers, the Paris-based World Association of Newspapers. AFP

Gays hold biggest parade in Brazil

SAO PAULO—The warm summer of Brazil's financial capital were jammed with dancers and revelers Sunday during the ninth annual Gay Pride parade, the biggest of its kind in the world.

Organizers said that some two million people (but not local) turned to demand the legalization of civil unions among homosexuals. Police put the number at 1.8 million.

"There have never been so many people at the Gay Pride Parade," said Beto Almeida, a spokesperson for the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender group that organized the parade.

"This shows that support for our cause, that of civil unions of people of the same sex," he said. "It is not only homosexuals and lesbians that participate in the parade, also sympathizers."

According to Globo News network, the event attracted some 300,000 tourists. Sao Paulo's biggest tourist event of the year.

The first such parade in Sao Paulo in 1997 drew only 2,000 people. Last year some 1.5 people marched.

The year's massive turnout made the event the largest gay pride parade in the world, twice the size of the gay pride parade in San Francisco, California. AFP

E-mail: jv_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

Julius Bonnie B. Velarde

ENTERTAINME

Shopping with an Angel?

ADS GIRL Angel Locsin

By Jocelyn Valle

The actress advises Axe promo winner Janssen Bulaclac to go for an iPod and a plasma TV

THE CONTROVERSY generated by Angel Locsin's sexy Axe commercial helped create sensation for the deodorant brand's raffle promo.

The was acknowledged by Bondie Gomez, marketing manager of Unilever maker of Axe, during the promo's culminating highlight Thursday. "We it wasn't our intention," he told Inquirer Entertainment.

In April, various women's groups, as well as Senator Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago, protested the "offensive manner" in which the girls were presented in Axe's "Choose the Girl, Spoil Her Money" promo ad. Angel, in particular, was shown riding off her leather jacket in front of a male admirer.

"That commercial was cleared by the Ad Board and we got the support of the BBCB (Movie and Television Review and Classification Board)," Gomez pointed out. "For anything that is different, you can expect both support and opposition. It all depends on people's interpretation. But if you watch it again, you'll realize that it's actually a funny ad. It's simply about a shopping date with the girl of your dreams. That's no harm at all."

The public mind have shared this insight because Axe posted a double-digit growth from the period the ad was launched in February until the promo formally ended on May 16, said Gomez.

Aside from Angel, four other girls—Ayanna Oliva, Bubbles Paraiso, Maribel Pamsa and Heidi MacCormac—star their respective shots last Thursday. Each one represents a particular type of woman, explained Gomez.

Angel is the movie TV star, Ayanna the artist, Heidi the girl next door, Bubbles the athlete and Maribel the model.

The participants in the raffle indicated in their entries the name of the girl they preferred, Gomez added. As expected, majority went for Angel. Ula "conservative" estimate! At least 20 persons. One winner of the P500,000 shopping money was then drawn from each pool of entries bearing the names of the girls.

Lucky guys Ejay Villas, Philip John Ingilan, James Ilano de Jesus and Alejandro Rumping Jr. instantly bonded with Ayanna, Heidi, Bubbles and Maribel, respectively, over Thursday's brunch of pizza and pasta.

Janssen Glen Bulaclac waited two hours for his shopping date to arrive. As soon as it was announced that Angel was on her way, the 19-year-old elementary communications engineering student from Cebu City was bombarded with teasing and frowning.

He couldn't hide his excitement when he finally met the "Darna" star. And Angel readily put Janssen at ease.

She hastened it up by chatting about sports, etc. She even let him sit beside her during the brief press interviews.

Janssen replied sheepishly to the affirmative when asked if he already had a girlfriend. The actress, on the other hand, was speechless when asked by Inquirer Entertainment about her rumored romance with Oyo Boy Sotto. "I don't know how to answer that... Ma'm just so happy when we're together," she

Winning in these parts

CHEER FACTOR

He watched DVDs for 41 hours!

Leslie Javier, a 37-year-old entrepreneur, clocked a staggering 41 hours of continuously watching DVD movies. No naps, no coffee or caffeine sodas, only five-minute restroom breaks.

What was his reward? Nothing less than a Philips DVD player and a 42-inch Philips TV. The feat was for Philips' "Dare To Outlast" challenge.

Javier outlasted four other patron-participants in the marathon recently held at the Eastwood City in Libis, Quezon City. Bryn Ho Wah's 40-year-old optometrist Feliz Inocencio Bobier, an optical shop accountant and manager Nancy Pablo Ladrama, a dentist process analyst, and Dhen Vincent Calanoria, a call center supervisor.

LESLIE Javier

According to Angelo Alvarez, Philips Consumer Electronics general manager, the four aspirants watched different sets of DVD movies that cut across genres, from action to comedy, musical, suspense and drama. They were served free breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks while they watched, and had only water and nature to drink.

"I'd do it again," said Javier.

Road to Hollywood

Three Star World viewers recently caught the "Hollywood Idol" finale—live in Los Angeles, California.

It was two nights of suspense, glamour and idol-gazing for Sheryl Marie Suarez of the Philippines, Princess Jumnongsri of Thailand and Simone Hardsky of Malaysia. They each got two-round-trip tickets, accommodations for two and a pair of tickets per night for the Al finale shows.

Suarez, 25, from Mandaluyong, Cavite, is an employee in the finance department of a multinational manufacturing company. "I still cannot believe I made it to Hollywood with my sisters Christine and Sunshine Ito and Carmi Ito!" Suarez said.

That was made possible by Star World's Asia-Wide and Trivia Quiz contests, launched

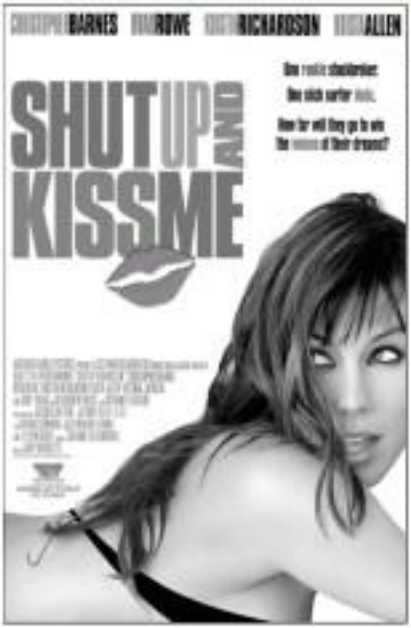
SHERYL and Chantae Suarez

Get SMS did it

With a single text message, a Globe friendly-phone subscriber won a once in a lifetime chance to watch the last Grammy Awards, all in in LA.

Ms. Gemma Nuñez Moreno was listening to the radio in her office one day when she decided to text in the answer to a promo question through her Globe Handyphone. She could hardly believe it when she got a call back saying

to Match to Amole from the grand prizes, weekly giveaways included a Philips Projection TV, Philips DVD players, apple iPod Shuffles, Interchain Idol CD albums and limited edition American Idol microphone sets.



Shopping with an Angel?

From page A1

said in Filipino.

Angel admitted though that she's gone out shopping with Dyo.

"So he has a hard time shopping for a guy, she confessed. "They want to go for just one style of clothes. Unlah I'll advise Jaisenne to shop for guy, gets like an iMod or a plasma TV."

Jaisenne, in fact, already has an iMod mini on top of his shopping list, along with the latest mobile phone model. Sculptor's Corner explained to Jaisenne that the winners need not spend all of their half million tokes in one go. "Use as much or just his money in the bank and another plan to use it for his education. It's OK with us. It's their money," he said.

Angel's contract with Unilever also officially expired after her shopping date with Jaisenne last Thursday. Gomez added, "But it doesn't mean that we're not going to hire her in the future. She's been very kind, helpful, cooperative and humble. She's also very popular now. But, yes, Angel's contract is only for this particular promo."

ANGEL'S shopping date Jaisenne Dee Boloclac

Winning

From page A1

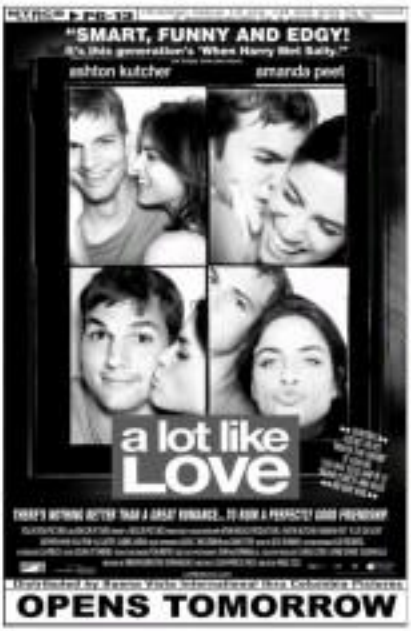
she had won a ticket to the United States to watch the Grammy live.

"I was shocked," said Dolor. A young wife and mother who works as a marketing assistant in a bank, she has been a loyal Globe subscriber for more than two years. It was only the second time she joined a text promo.

In LA, after some sightseeing, she sat in during radio interviews with celebrity guests. Over two days, she met the Backstreet Boys, Ludacris, Earth, Wind and Fire, and Sarayn Pino.

The big night finally came, and Dolor had a great time watching the ceremonies in the Staples Center. "It was so exciting because it's usually something you see only on TV, and there I was watching it live," she said. A substance at the ceremonies is normally a privilege extended only to musicians and other celebrities, or to managers and recording company executives.

Alex Gonzaga, Dolor's buddy the host of her LA experience, took a tour of the city's sights and nearby Santa Monica beach.



ENTERTAINMENT

E-mail: jr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Emeritus Q. Velarde

Which shows can be censored?

By Maricelle Cruz

ONLY television programs that "sensationalize and glorify sexual promotion and gratuitous violence" may be scrutinized by the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board, MTRCB Chief Jiggins Lagumbay clarified this week days after the board took back its order requiring prior court approval for public affairs shows.

In a phone interview with Inquirer Entertainment yesterday, Lagumbay said an MTRCB committee would determine which programs would then be monitored.

The MTRCB last week issued a memorandum, dated May 17, requiring TV shows to submit materials to the MTRCB "for review and approval prior to release."

But in a memo dated May 30, a copy of which was sent to Inquirer Entertainment also yesterday, Lagumbay said "it was never my intention to prohibit, restrain or disallow the broadcast of any public affairs programs. [The previous memo] was intended to check media abuses, specifically programs that appeal to prurient interest or programs that falsely color the meaning for gratuitous sex and/or violence."

Lagumbay added that the board would "unanimously uphold the constitutional right of media to freedom of expression."

The May 17 memo cited the Supreme Court decision and Presidential Decree 1986 that said all public affairs programs, their shooting matters, media political editorials and programs of the same category were subject to review by the MTRCB.

Basil Valdez remembers dear friend Richard Tann

By Raquel San Diego Jr.

"He was like a brother to me," balladeer Basil Valdez described his good friend, fellow Circus Band "graduate" and former manager Richard Tann, who succumbed to a heart attack on May 26.

"We were friends even before Circus Band," Valdez told Inquirer Entertainment on the first night of Tann's wake at the Sanctuario de San Antonio in Forbes Park.

Valdez, an Atenean, met Tann when the latter was still in Xavier High School, sometime in 1970. "That was in a three-day retreat, Days With the Lord," Valdez recalled. "I later joined his group, Chimera Catholic Youth."

Before Circus

They teamed up as a duet, specializing in folk songs by Simon & Garfunkel and performing in different campuses.

Valdez persuaded Tann to join the Circus Band in 1971. They shared the stage with Jaqui Magno, Tillie Marcos, Pat Castillo, Fides Endrina, Heidi Mendoza and Dyan Pastores.

"He had a unique voice," Valdez said.

Tann eventually chose to stay in the sidelines, acting as Valdez's first manager and steering the latter's career to the pinnacle with such OPM classics as "Sigaw sa Kalaunan" and "Sandaling Pahinguin" in the mid-'70s.

Valdez is now managed by Myrgard Yuco, but he kept in constant touch with Tann. The last time the two old friends were together was "exactly a year and two days ago," Valdez recalled, during a show at the Westin Philippine Plaza. Valdez said he gave Tann one day's leave to birthday, May 5.

"He had four sisters, and his father died when he was 14," Valdez related. "He regarded me as the older brother he never had. He used to run to me for everything. He modified his problems to me."

Tann's remains will be cremated today.

THE 1970's CIRCUS BAND including Basil, front row left, and Richard, back row second from right.

HUNTER Thompson (left) and Johnny Depp.

Depp grant's his pal's wish

DENVER, Colorado—The ashes of legendary "gonzo journalist" Hunter S. Thompson will be fired from a cannon because of a giant fist-shaped monument paid for by movie star Johnny Depp, a friend told AFP on Friday.

Depp, who played the eccentric outlaw icon in the 1998 film "Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas," is financing the 45-metre (150-foot) steel monument that will be the centrepiece of Thompson's Aug. 20 memorial service.

Star-studded

The service, to be held in the Colorado foothills where the 67-year-old Thompson shot himself on Feb. 20, will also be attended by Hollywood luminaries Sean Penn and Jack Nicholson, and Thompson's friend Troy Hooper.

Subway got involved with Dr. Gonzo character after Hunter's suicide," said Hooper, who is also associate editor of Thompson's local newspaper, the Aspen Daily News.

"Hunter had discussed this idea of having his remains fired out of a cannon on film and in the interviews and Johnny has the money and the wherewithal to make this happen," Hooper told AFP.

Sunset rites

The monument then will honor the cannon it already being erected near Thompson's fortified compound in Woody Creek, not far from the ski town of Aspen, ahead of the funeral ceremony to be held exactly six months after the author's death.

The cannon will blast and scatter Thompson's remains across his property in his last great publicity stunt.

"It will be very fitting—Hunter probably wouldn't have dreamed up it's him and if he were still here, he would have loved the salutation," Hooper said. AFP

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2 LA VISA LOCA
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Calculated mayhem

"THE FIRST thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers," says Dick the Butcher in Shakespeare's "Henry the Sixth."

Some people may be taking Dick the Butcher's call literally: murder as activism and cause-oriented lawyers are concerned. In 2084 seven lawyers and judges were killed and this year, four have been assassinated, for a total of 11 slain in the last 18 months.

EDITORIALS The activist lawyers are among the endangered groups during the Arroyo administration, together with the journalists and political and social militants. The killings of lawyers has prompted former Senate President Jovito Salonga to ask: "What are we to say in the face of this seemingly calculated mayhem against the cause-oriented?"

Salonga said that if both the government and the people miss the "dire significance" of the lawyers' killings, "it will be to our grievous peril as a just and democratic society. For it is upon these three basic institutions—that of a free press, a militant church and an unsuspecting-cum-alert citizenry—on which the life and strength of our nation must rest."

There may be many jokes about how lawyers further complicate our already complicated lives, but we do need them to put order in our lives. Lawyers draw up pre-nuptial agreements, protect the rights of children born out of wedlock, draw up the terms of legal separation or annulment of marriage, draft last wills and testaments and settle the conflicts when people die intestate. They are needed in many aspects of our political, social and economic life.

Activist lawyers are a special breed who protect the lives and liberties of people and insure the survival of freedom and democracy in our country. Kill them off, and you take a big step toward authoritarian, totalitarian rule. That's why it's alarming that activist lawyers, together with journalists and political militants, appear to be especially targeted for assassination by some people or groups.

In previous editorials, we urged a stop to the killings of journalists. Now we say stop the killings of activist lawyers. Protect them from those who would smother freedom and democracy in our country.

Gun worship

THE KILLINGS of activist lawyers are part of the culture of violence that is getting worse every day. Such slaying is a grim statistic in the rising rate of criminality engulfing the nation.

The culture of violence is worsening because of the culture of impunity. So one has been punished for the killings of journalists, activist lawyers and political militants. Some heedless and trigger-happy are arrested, but the masterminds and the brains go scot-free.

It is very easy to engage in assassination nowadays because weapons are readily available. If one has the money, one can always buy a gun that is needed to do the job. Or if one doesn't want to do the dirty job himself, money will buy a hired gun that will do it for him.

"Gun worship" is a big part of the culture of violence that is making our country one of the most murderous for journalists and activists. Many people just love to buy guns, display them and carry them outside their residences. And at the slightest provocation they are ready to use the guns against their fellowmen.

In the midst of these developments, Nandy Pacheco, president of the Alliance for the Common Good and the Gardens Society, last week suggested to the President and Congress a multi-dimensional approach to peace. His proposal includes a relaxation of what he has been arguing all these years—strict gun control that would bar everyone from carrying guns in public places, except police officers, soldiers or licensed private security guards in uniform and on duty.

Pacheco makes it clear that he is not against responsible sportsmen or gun owners keeping licensed guns at home or at a gun club. He would increase the penalty for illegal possession of firearms and violation of any firearms law from reclusion temporal (12 to 20 years imprisonment) without parole or parole to reclusion perpetua (life imprisonment, with the possibility of pardon after 30 years).

Some people will agree say that Pacheco's proposal is optimistic, and almost impossible to carry out. But we have to start somewhere; we have to put order in our country; we have to promote peace and put an end to the violence and lawlessness that are obstacles to the building of a just and orderly society.

Outrage to religion

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

THE ITALIAN journalist Oriana Fallaci will be prosecuted by some radical Muslims in some still unspecified country on "charges of outrage to religion," Vibrio Media Service reports. Bilbao's own Nash: "The Point of Reason," triggered this threat.

In Quezon City outraged ignore to Cross-hairers asked the city regional trial court to ban a book that hasn't even reached bookstores yet, columnist Jojo Robles reports. Now Ilpos will join his hero-to-be. "The Power and the Glory: The Cult of Marcos."

The 74-year old Fallaci is known to the world as a "valiant journalist." She literally risks her life to get the story. Those who only read what they've written say no journalist is a prige (polished term.) "She must write."

This Florence-born superstar's books must-viewing-style team people. Scintillah illustrator squeezed where she's being under the mosaic. Her book, "Interview with History," began as a session with then US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. "You're not a journalist yet you!"

But like the equally blunt but more polite Mrs. Sebastian of "Rifle," Fallaci gets the decision. In her book, "Interview With History," she probes the psychological insights of a great novelist and the inventor of a heavy-quit bill," writes the New York Times Book Review.

Unlike Fallaci, we have little to go by either to provoke, harass or to sanction the unspecified records by Tipoti. The title, though, recalls Graham Greene's 1940 novel, "The Power and the Glory," a searing probe into "religion's searing complexities in contemporary culture," as Professor Emeritus of History and Cognate Languages Harry Stark Bowie.

Greene never named his main character, an alcoholic priest who believed a child. Despite his flaws, he doggedly celebrates Mass, baptizes children and hears confessions, while being hunted by the police. And before shooting of the hostile, he turns back, responding to a call for him to anoint a dying man. It was a trap. Caught, he was executed in front.

The whiskey priest haunted himself, yet "in spite of his sin, my imagination," a friend asked me, "or have cars with circus designs not entered at last?"

At the same my friend asked me this, which was my birthday two Friday, I had just had another experience with me. I was on Elm on my way to Makati when a big car jay-ran into. After it as a first Republican, I don't know about those things) began hustling at me. So I hustled back at him in self-defense. Fighting on the front of his car, making it look like a dent, and a street-side flashing bright red on the roof of his car. "Thank God, for small blessings, it wasn't anything angrily at the world. I was on my left and was all the more of cops there at one. I had absolutely no idea what possessed him to go into hustling mode. I myself had absolutely no memories of hanging even if there weren't any cars in front of me.

Eventually, he spun to his right, and more through the other cars, like an ambulance: I seemed to get the idea's number, but saw only the number "8." If I'm not mistaken, that means congressman. I was right, an idiot.

He cleared my friend, it was one for ring. Then he was released with her. I've had the experience more and more frequently of late. The most infuriating of which is the presentation of black cars that now and then race down to the front the opposite direction—"counter-flow," our fellow-motorists call it—blowing if they had a loudspeaker, they would probably be screaming, "You don't stop aside, you die!"

That's the reason I sympathized completely with the leader of people who called up Arnold Clavio and Ali Sotto's program on dzRH last week to protest the issuance of license plates to any fixed Executive's driver. A motorist named Ai complained that Gonzalez's escort police don't give at him when he tried to pass their slow-moving one-car convoy on Edsa. Gonzalez's driver, a fellow motorist complained to the use of force saying that when motorists see a convoy of government cars, they should get the hell out of the way. When Clavio presented this, saying he had as much right to the road as Gonzalez, Gonzalez's driver replied that he was "only following orders."

It's not when it comes off the press, "The Power and The Glory" (best version) will be different. In e-mails to journalists, the author signals it'll be a crash to investigative journalism on issues festering within RC. Those include: the Church's public policy quarantine from the INC bribed members from joining labor unions? Will it continue to practice "voting in bloc"?

"Social Weather Stations reported after the last election that a quarter of poor families they surveyed received cash," she added more to INC Executive Minister Eraño Manalo. "In the 1995 "soup elections"...a good chunk of your membership voted for Cory Aquino...Do you have any plans to do away with this practice?"

Other unspecified data in the Pinoys, Mindanao and Bicol shows he claims. "INC is now being outstripped by Evangelicals and even by muslim Protestants such as Baptists, UCCP, and United Methodists."

The interview candidate mayor Ginggo Gonzalez's plans to work together a book by a controversial still to be corrected. "Methodists journalist," Bonanza & Co. say, will document how coup planners saved democracy for the Philippine people not once-twice as most believe.

The 1987 Constitution, however, intended law of the land. And it provides for library to disseminate information by print or electronic media, without prior restraint such as licensing requirements or censorship. It forbids subsequent punishment for what is said. It shields all news from outraged religious leaders.

The prohibition against prior restraint and subsequent punishment from fanatical crybullies has come go all the way back to Hitch in "Anti-semitism." Jews, Hitler asserted, exercise monopoly on the press by Tudor and Stuart monarchs. Hitler's objections at prior restraint supposedly became a cornerstone of free freedom.

The only recognized grounds for prior restraint has been national security. But in 1971, the US Supreme Court struck down a suit against Daniel Ellsberg who leaked the Pentagon papers. Freedom of the press and speech were protected as fundamental rights of the people, the court declared.

Obscenity and violations of copyright were considered outside the First Amendment's shield. Libel remained a civil matter. Exceptions for pimbo's clubs are afforded a reduced level of protection. In addition, broadcasters are subject to government licensing requirements.

The Philippines has incidentally bowed to this libertarian concept. The only exception was when Marcos dictatorship dismantled constitutional protections in the name of saving the country from communism.

Today, the debate swirls around protection for forms of speech that encourage injustice. In 5, a US federal district court panel in 1996 held that Internet messages were entitled to the same degree of protection as printed communications.

Starting on June 11, we will see how the Quezon City court resolves the *INC Online* issue as will as be published book. Will it unleash countervailing libel and intimidation? Abrogate the barrier on the street corner soapbox.

"We don't have to like them," Wilson column Dr. Kathleen Pimbo writes. "But we allow them to so invite silence to our own freedom. Thus, outrage to religion' isn't a crime, but is a testament to our faith in freedom."

(E-mail: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph)

Drunk with power

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

"IF IT just my imagination," a friend asked me, "or have cars with circus designs not entered at last?"

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(E-mail: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph)

The operative word: a consequence. What mind-purity are Cabinet officials trying to steer into daily lives?

Iran, in fact, think of new compelling reasons why Cabinet officials in particular should collect exactly the same fare as bridgehead sustenance, or be reduced to complete immobility. The first is that it would give them a glimpse of how people in Manila the rest of their countrymen live, the better to understand their problems and thus alleviating pooping or at least about using taxes to improve traffic, among other national afflictions, and not just their bank accounts. The second is related to the first. The hurt that that kind of policy would inflict on the people of the country in Asia most suggest that most public officials, chief of them Cabinet officials, are nonetheless crooks. Why should we want to assure that they will get to where they want to go in the least amount of time when all they will be themselves is increasingly and nastier?

But quite apart from this, what gall this fellow has. I myself am trying to meet deadlines all the time, but I do not assume my time is more precious or else or to the country than those of my fellow men and women. Nothing more than that of a politician or lawyer, but that is another story. I can assure Gonzalez his preoccupations are not more important than mine; they are definitely less so. At least...I can assure you my preoccupations do not involve the use of force to compel the lesser "people." Wasn't he the fellow who said in the best way to press PERC's issue that we write the invalid issue envelope current in Asia was to ignore it? Wasn't he the fellow who, applauded all motorists who were willing to totally ignore the Vim Pinoli's complicity in jaywalking, proposed to go after the witnesses? No, I'm not surprised he should think Cabinet officials are not ordinary motorists but kings of the road.

I should of course relate Senator Gonzalez tells us Clavio's program for the road on the head. "Kaya sumisi pala sila sa Diyos," he said, "sinusuko yung amo." (No wonder the driver is abusive, his employer too.)

Hearsay, says Drilon

THEY solons was being serious today six years after the first Senate hearing on jueteng, conducted by the committee on public order and drugs and games and amusements, chaired by Senator Renato "Dodong" Cayetano, respectively. Each of us voiced the strongest objections to the measure, led by Sen. Aquilino Pimentel, to any idea of criminalizing the jueteng. Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan had opined that, if "no new and credible information is never-before-seen that would warrant the reversal of the decision to not criminalized. This stated Pimentel's durable up. At that point, I was certainly by an incredible irony.

* * *

In the 1998 elections, Vice President Joseph Estrada ran for the presidency against Speaker Jose de Venecia, chieftain of the best-organized and most powerful political party, the Lakas-NUCD, with only a paper party. Partido ng Masang Pilipino. Estrada won on the strength of his movie-star appeal and, as widely acknowledged then by political pundits, the jueteng payoffs were the country. The network took care even of distributing the payoffs to the barangay level. That network has the most powerful political machinery at that time and carried Erap to Malacañang. Unfortunately, it also proved his undoing, for the initial smoking gun that led to his ouster was the revelation in Jinggoy Estrada's testimony that he and his mother personally delivered payoffs to Erap's mistress.

* * *

The obvious play of the opposition is to name Senator Estrada's durability linking his relatives and even his Erap's himself in jueteng. The Senate hearings were touted in advance to produce key witnesses who would nail her down. Extremely the witness who appeared was Governor Chavit Singson, who had been a longtime friend of Erap and the two very against GMA in a "complete" or "down ego," as Amando Doronila put it, of Erap it.

Singson's testimony was limited with the "buy" Major and/or Jinggoy but he had regularly given P500,000 to Erap in Estrada "Kuya" as well as the huge sum of their Binondo Wai-Yee Hing Money Arroyo. Hearsay also implicated three Allies congressmen, PNP Director General Hermie Lobitos and others. The problem, however, as Senate President Frank Drilon succinct at the hearing, is that May-an's testimony is hearsay inasmuch as he admitted that he never dealt directly with the young Estrada. It was supposedly Jinggoy who delivered the money to him. That is unlike the direct testimony of Chavit Singson on Erap. Thus, the crucial piece of Singson's testimony has to be corroborated, although technically not by Chavit, who does not, and, pointed prosecutor witnesses. Let us see.

* * *

Gen. has said a lot of things over the past three weeks about jueteng, but perhaps the most memorable was his observation that the "PNP" report that jueteng had been stopped in many places in Luzon was not true, since "guerrilla-type jueteng operations are rampant in here." Guerrilla warfare, however, is the most difficult type to fight, as the AFP's nearly 44-year fight with the NPAs and Moro rebels underscore but proved Chabacano Chief Antonio Cruz hopes to put an end to insurgency in his term is to 19 years). Confidently, in fairness, this means there's some basis for Arroyo's thinking that outlawing it, as the anti-jueteng law, is the antidote to rampant corruption. I remember when I was in Cagayan in the early 1990s and my interest against the prevailing defenders, had one comment. He said that in his native Ilocos, there is no jueteng because hard officials won't have anything to do with it. Indeed, in the whole of Ilocos the governors won't have it. I understand that a number of mayors in Region IV, who were once reputed to be the godfather of jueteng in his area, was asked recently how it seems to have vanished. His answer was simple: "Iyan nagbago."

* * *

It can be done, and I hope there will be more men of caliber who will come out and say he is in the blood-banker of the Filipino poor.

* * *

In Jamaica came out with a story about the Hongkong money-laundering by the Armed Forces of the Philippines for the use of its personnel drawn to the rank and file. That project is ill-timed and bound to be misunderstood, as Senator Pimentel has already said, even if AFP funds were not spent. It was said to have been built from private donations. The AFP handled in the final turnabout Hermie Lobitos has stood up another in Time Magazine, in a story by Arthur Spiegel, about how noble it is to fight terrorism on account of poor combat equipment and low personnel morale. Spiegel noted that soldiers and officers have died due to lack of equipment and medical help.

What is the fate of the Kamel Foundation have long been aware of this problem in the field. This is why our most recent program is "Bahay Para sa Kawal," where we aim a total money of P1 million to build 100 houses for soldiers. Anyone plus additional funds raised through donations is used to build a 30-medical school will will survive the combat units in Mindanao.

* * *

The Bataan's more is ill-advised and could only contribute even more to the demoralization of the rank and file, as noted by various international news organizations. For one thing, Bataan's country is not involved with terrorism. For another, we are already spending their own holidays in various places. Even though the treaty is supposed to come due to the outdated personnel, their former get to the city on their own. In fact, they even have problems getting home some C-130s to go home after a year.

We at AFK are aware of the problems and have tried to help them get older on. Alumni ships for amicable housing home homes. AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Efren Abu should examine his priorities.

The educated heart

TEACHING children may sound like child's play, but most mothers remember their jobs highly demanding undertakings. Standard no. 1 is a sure solution to educate not just the mind but the heart as well.

My young students come from different family backgrounds, races, cultures and religions, but they have one thing in common: a pure and innocent heart. The heart of a child is a royal seat.

Trying to be filled with all the goodness and strength he needs as he grows up to face uncertainty, a supreme Intelligence God, in his humility and is himself. This is why aside from teaching children to read, write, count and do arithmetic, I incorporate the wonders of science; I believe a teacher is also duty-bound to help their parents and guardians in educating their hearts. If the heart is neglected, the child will grow up with a cold heart, and still fail in. Then my child will decide to take charge of his life because he is fearful and distrustful of others, especially of people more powerful than him, like his parents, guardians, elders, teachers and government leaders.

What is educated heart? It is the wellspring of goodness which brings forth kindness, good manners, politeness and consideration or respect for others. Going to the best schools or universities does not guarantee that the heart will get the best possible education. Even unschooled persons can acquire it. It is visible in a street sweeper who does his job well, in a driver who is courteous to pedestrians and motorists; in an attendant worker who greets his customers in a respectful tone, in a farmer who shares his produce with the needy anonymously; in a jeepney driver who observes road courtesy; in an out-of-school youth who opens the door for a person with disability or gives his seat to an elderly to do.

Sadly there are many around us who do exactly the opposite: office employees who mindlessly litter the streets with cigarette butts and empty soft drink cans; college graduates who refuse to give their elders a helping hand; students who push others in order to get ahead; people with physical defects, like in wigs places whose idea of having fun is poking others' physical defects; women.

The art of giving gives a clue to the sensitivity of one's heart. From our early years, we learn that inspiring, "it is the thought, not the cost, that counts." This there are situations where the cost is the thought. For example, the narrow value drawers tax friends with pricey gifts. On her most joint, however, her many Christmas giveaways consist of old clothes, used pairs of shoes with missing laces, plastics that are stained from age, outmoded costume jewelry and other items she has received as gifts. Obviously, this is how she thinks of a she rich lady who goes out of her way to visit her less fortunate relations to bring good cheer and share with them her material blessings to meet their needs.

Children with educated hearts can teach us that nuggets of happiness are found in the simplest of things and events. One time, a male girl gave me a small silk-covered lava container, a recently forgive. "I chose it myself, Teacher," she beamed with pride. After the class, she student told the that her daughter had indeed plucked it herself from their Cabin. was very because it was her favorite and she wanted me to have it. In a moment, I was overjoyed at elegant giving.

The elegance of giving was also demonstrated by the young lady who could not afford to give an expensive wedding present to her best friend. She knew that her friend was not an interesting how to cook, so she collected kitchen-related recipes from various sources, typed them neatly on bond paper cards, and arranged them artistically in a wooden box. The newlyweds considered her gift as a true gem among the expensive gifts they received.

Expressing genuine gratitude is something that so educated heart needs to an off. A man who had just lost his job received an unexpected letter from a friend who had found him a new job. Overjoyed, he sent the giver a thank-you note. Months later, he met him another letter saying that he had a new job and that the book helped him gain a brighter outlook in life. If that isn't heartwarming, what is?

There is a Malay saying that goes, while hair-lying is not cancer, since time to reply to letters, tear and e-mail messages from well-wishers because she believes that sentiment's good wish, one gives something of oneself.

Making life a little lighter for ordinary workers is another trait of an educated heart. It can be as simple gesture, like giving a smile to a janitor who is sweeping the sidewalk, or if his personal means be accepted, giving an itinerant shoeshine boy a bottle of cold drink, or putting your empty cigar and lighter on places at the trash bin after a late-food meal to ease the janitors' workload. You would never know how a simple kindness could lift up the spirit of someone who is struggling with poverty.

What may be the Filipino equivalent of having an educated heart? Maybe, "Mabuti ang may kabuti," or "Mabuti ang may kabuti" for manners. "Ay mabuti," our Spanish neighbors would say of a person who showed no consideration for the feelings of others.

It is easy to open the heart that lacks education. It always motivated to go ahead of others in line, on the road, in a crowded tea room, at the food service counter, and other places where necessary to an unselfish rule. It grounds on the neighborhood, or in the workplace. It does not cut in front of the door on traveling elevators, makes distribution of people, refuses to honor unnecessary violent explanation, grasps sincerely or refuses vicious gossip, and gains credit than others.

From my experience as a teacher, I know that such person is gifted with earlier wisdom and, the majority for kindness and goodness. One does not have to be a statesman, preacher or civic leader to be able to bring hope and bring about positive changes within one's own sphere of influence. By entering my heart, we can raise the level of self-esteem, hope and faith in ourselves—so that can only make us better persons as well.

Dr. Reginald Mercenio, 27, is a licensed nutritionist-dietitian and teacher at a child development center in Metro Manila.

Young Blood

Ivy Regina B. Montefalcon

We need to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the teen/preteen/blog and below—Ed.

I'm sorry to hear about the young boy who was killed by a stray bullet. I'm sad to say that this is not the only incident of its kind. Many innocent people have been killed by stray bullets. Some of the victims were children.

I'm not sure if the boy's parents are to blame for his death. Maybe they are, maybe they're not. But I think that the government should do something about this problem. Maybe they should start a campaign against illegal firearms. Maybe they should start a campaign against illegal firearms. Maybe they should start a campaign against illegal firearms

Poverty: the mother of all 'jueteng'

LETTERS

...JUETENG has dominated the front pages of newspapers for weeks now. President Macapagal-Arroyo has denied involving a single centavo from jueteng. Not Sec. Lozada, not Sec. Ermita, not Sec. Ronaldo Lamon would only raise his eyebrows. Rolan Abadilla is the Bicol region lotto baron assisted the dark lad, set to curb the illegal numbers game, while dozens of "kadwakers" (hen collectors) have been rounded up. Presidential screenings have been ordered and instituted, an issue vowed to conduct, yet again, another inquiry.

But still, jueteng exists. Solar ang hain. (The show goes on.)

I was born and raised in a remote town in Batangas where jueteng has become a way of life. Many, many nights, you hear the same question: "Anong kabit mo?" (What's the winning combination number?)

As a child, I had an idea that jueteng was illegal. Everytime a relative wins, people would troop to his house and ask for "balato." Everybody felt like a winner including the kabenter who automatically got a percentage from the winnings. Even us, toddlers, were unwittingly encouraged here to gamble. I remember our uncles and aunts often asking us, "Sus, anong sinasabi Mapatili ka ng sabon'g Aika." (Give me a number combination, quick.) And I had the misfortune of winning sometimes I suppose.

But as I grew older, I realized why jueteng existed and continues to exist in our town, it's because of poverty. Both of subsistence fishermen and a town economy that revolves around the tobacco industry. Tobacco farmers, people earn so jueteng operators for "sargueseuhan."

A stark claim, unacceptable like one doesn't have much to offer for job-seekers. Richest the jobless town for one in Manila or poverty will haunt them forever.

It all boils down to economics. They say fewer guns can to those lowly but educated who have been jailed for merely betting to feed their families, affects the guilty.

There are trying times indeed. And not everyone is blessed with the affluence to stay in a luxurious Las Vegas hotel or fly to Singapore when he can't stand the heat in Manila.

The government should provide jobs for the unemployed. The battle against jueteng or smoke will amount to nothing if thousands are being deprived of their only means to live a decent life.

By the way, a text message from my sister in Batangas just came in. Asked if jueteng will continue to run when Gov. Mr Arroyo's declaration of all-out war against it, she replied, "May kokuya. Pero go ngo lang." (The jueteng dreams continue. Except that they're done covertly.)

—LEIZL LAGMAY,
Sir Justice Bldg. 3, Ilihia, Candelaga, Makati

PUNONGBAYAN on an inspection tour

An outstanding man

DR. ARMI JAMITH C. Panoaglaqua was an outstanding man as attested by his selfless service to the nation, by his decisive role in his craft and by his humble disposition.

The National Land Use Committee (NLUC), chaired by the National Economic and Development Authority, was privileged to have had him as an active member. Ever supportive of NLUC activities, he was always ready to provide the necessary technical expertise and resources to NLUC endeavors. In the formulation of the National Framework for Physical Planning 2001-2030, for instance, he led and organized a group of experts from the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology in the preparation, standardization and processing of the required maps, and wrote the sections on natural hazards and disaster preparedness.

The NLUC secretariat truly enjoyed working with him not only because he "harmonized" and injects humor to ease hectic and unpleasant moments but also because he was very approachable, accommodating and fun-to-be-with.

To quote the citation that NLUC chair Augusto B. Santos presented to him on June 17, 2002: "We will always remember his wisdom and down-to-earth manner in introducing the first whole rounding terminator-land issues even beyond the call of duty."

—MARITES D.V. DAÑUGA,
director, Strike-SDCC and NLUC Secretary,
mdanuga@mnlu.gov.ph

A tribute to Inday Purit

I CANNOT remember when WOM and I first met Purita Kalaw Ledesma. Among the first memories of our one-on-one contacts was our dinner (WOM and myself) at the Ledesma residence during Senator Roseller Lim's Bistro Bistro. Purita's Pasta duo prepared, I learned to enjoy avocado laced with "fresh cream."

The next venue of our dinner with Purita was in her home, Tiwan Street, Quezon City. She had begun to give us pieces of antiques, perhaps my first gift from her was WOM and I were more into literature and writing, our reason set us not have a collection of paintings. But I must have received some rapidness to the circumstances that surrounded Purita's artistic persona. WOM and I were then the most talented (Laguna) who was Purity's professor in psychology with a party in her Diamond Hotel. Food was flown in from Bacolod. There were other guests, but I remember Dra. Teresita Lalaan and Raul Sison the most.

But the occasion that made WOM proud to a chosen friend was when Purita asked him to be a guest of honor at the launching of her book, "And Life Goes On" at Ayala Center. WOM was happy to see an old friend, Minister Nestor Reyes, who was in a retreat which I remember meeting Nelia Magsaysay-Sison and other painters and writers. WOM called Purita's book a landmark, not just an autobiography. She is a cultural history of the times gone, of early historical events. When I asked Purita why the dinner WOM as special guest, all she would say was, "WOM is a good man."

In the mid-1990s, WOM and I had a Mass celebrated and a birthday party held as a sort of despedida for our son, Nino, who was then destined to go to Rome by the invitation of Cardinal Sin to study Pastoral Ministry at the Urbaniana University. Purita was present in the Mass. She couldn't come to the reception. Her sickness took over her. Then was the start of falling health.

We never saw her again. We were home to stay in 1998. WOM died in 1999. Now and then I would ask about Purita. I would send her some cards. I even asked Wally to read my last note to her.

Goodbye and rest in peace, Inday Purita.

—HARVEY GONZALES,
mmmag@yahoo.com

Abolish Congress instead of MMDA

WE know that the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority under the leadership of Bayani Fernando made big changes in Metro Manila. Unbridgeted drivers and resident may dislike him, but as the saying goes in Tagalog "Pinahirapbang ... walang pinipinalan." (It's all worth, nothing personal.)

Rep. Teodoro Locsin Jr. III seeking to abolish the MMDA is underestimating because he is an ally of Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay. Fernando is trying his best to improve traffic and circulation in Metro Manila. Millions of Filipinos would appreciate Mr. Locsin's efforts in using nothing but sweet taxpayers' money), rather than the MMDA, abolished. Metro Manila mayors are only after the seats some time abolished, it is not for the good of the metro. MMDA has done a lot for Metro Manila, while Congress has done nothing.

—RUDOLPH BAUTISTA JOSON,
bayaninggunggoli@yahoo.com

Still unheard

THIS is in reaction to the reported rift in the ranks of the Senate minority over Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile's membership in the Commission on Appointments (CPR: S 20/05).

The disagreement may be seen as a smokescreen to a healthy democracy. However, voters and ordinary citizens cannot help but feel frustrated. The rift stems as the CA is meeting on Alfredo Tarbuena's confirmation as secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

A number of commissioners and organizations expressed their opposition to Tarbuena's confirmation. Their objection was based on his serious and behavior as DENR's top honcho, as well as his ineffective handling of the Quezon Aurora

Lito Lapid's chutzpah

"CHUTZPAH" is derived from the Hebrew word "tzafah" meaning "cupidity, selfbelief and confidence." If I can use it in a sentence, I'd say: "Lito Lapid is overdoing with chutzpah!" The Philippine Daily Inquirer should be commended for its May 20 editorial, "Bullied and sadly" which spelled out the reasons why Lapid should not exhibit himself from any Senate inquiry on jueteng. The humiliation is, this person has no integrity to conduct an unbiased investigation. Worse than I do not address him as "senator!" If he had inhibited himself and respected my right to be offended, I probably would have shed or show a little more respect for him. But, you're right, he just does not get it! There's not even the slightest indication that he acknowledges the impunity as a insider in the Senate. Like I said, "morning with chutzpah!" Senator PDI, keep on writing poignant editorials!

—BENEDICT CACES,
cacesb@pharm.uerm.edu

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Inquirer

Can the Arroyo administration stop jueteng?

maybe if the focus first on her family. she might stop it.
— ray ballering, 28, metro manila

gloria must bag her husband to stop this nonsense.
—Bernard Bajali, Nueva City

NO! Arroyo administration can stop "nothing". They can't even clear corruption will this mess of Pres. jueteng pa kaya!
—Ricardo R. Reyes, 24, Tarlac City

I believe stopping jueteng is no big deal. Just ask the Philippine Marines, they can do anything.
— shiery jean pere-bano, 24, ateneo

YES but if Pres. will take it that if she is really determined into it. The president has all it takes. Be in always hope.
— Lolita Busquina, 34, negros

No it is never it minor problem is day until solve. how much been jueteng. wh halos lahat ng tao jue ang Administration ng family nila.
— Bienvenido Alejandro, 28, bicol, cavite

Unless we also stop patronizing the manufacturers of GRA ang jueteng.
— Bernie Martin, San Agustin, Lucena

I believe yes if current admin can stop jueteng how it STOP! they are if only controlling it. Look, in 1 day, it regains jueteng ban, now.
— Neil Jovenes, 38, Laguna

Its hard to pin down this admin. Just rely stop jueteng, its double bin done it on July 25th. 2004"
— Rick Z. Domago, ANGELES AND City

no, it can't stop jueteng unless if you're 100% clin on business. Jueteng e kasi ang bella ni si bad 2" no. of numbers ang in four digit.
— jul, 31, caloocan

No she can't. clear jueteng cause bad thing, eh kung mhuhuling prof., ang sangkot. magpapakawala sa cya eh...
— Jea Tiamzon, 23, QC

No way can arroyo admn. stop jueteng cuz it has been a Filipino way of life especially poor
— Evelin Mars, 46, Sampaloc city

No. Jueteng si "poor" people has been a way of life. It has been in their system 4 decades now.
— Bienvenido B. Leibenflos, 27, Pampanga

MEDIA STOP IT CNN is diversional

questions and answers by "Ka Oryo". Kung ayan na lang ang GMC (manhattan shuttle) ?
— ivo abana, 24, pulanggui

probably. its a NO. it can't even solve simple problems (pti bumb. nalimutan or murder case). how much more complex problem like jueteng?
— Charrie Johanna Z. Domago, 13, Ilog, Negros City

I think PGMA may stop it jueteng by completely ng city patrol. Also crime. implementation of RA 7610 & by cooperation of a people.
— Agnes Ching, 19, Manila

NO, IT CANNOT BECAUSE IS OPERATE BY OFFICIALS. KAILAN pa MAKAKITA SIKITA mag GETS ang NATIN. Until he Date ng LIST OFFICIALS
— manuel cruz, 30, bais

yes they can but I don't know if they would
— Fitz-emmanuel gale-bullan, 15, iligan

NO! Jueteng is already a part of our society and its profitable, unless good done something it of society and corruption.
— jaime martinez, 27, mabitac, lg

No, bulit cha pero. Mahirap na for one pare, anyhow pare.
— eduardo saga, 17, pasay city

no good choice if pilit gulmat ito. Independiente succeeded to quashing jueteng as it has become evil part of it! Its sad one.
— Vladimir C. Vega, 45, Dumaguete City

I have doubts because di cla-pulgo kasi ang ito at ayaw nila. not the masses, sadako dito.
Shaira Ang, 15, del pilar

di arroyo admin can stop all forms of illegal gambling. Bkan God said ang, di mpo stopped.
— abe-cadiz, 45, sibugay, La Libon

YES! GMA you needs to handle it with an iron fist, plus it would help if we all join in some support.
— rosemary mellarin, 52, cebu lounge city

No, it has been a way of life, is poor Pinoy? hope out of poverty.
— eduardo cleto, 42, qc

No, sa kinay ng buhay ngayon! Lalong dadami yang jueteng! Lalong yayaman ang ating mayor!
— gay-lopez, digos city

No. its hard 2 stop it its already a way of life. just admin its it already. It closed 4 months, then reopens again.
— Ben Aglugub, 32, mabalon city

Well saying think ng Arroyo administration ang jueteng dahil "nasisiyahan sila..."
— Agnes Pastino, 60, Manila

It caused it section of it sheriff, led by Bishop Cruz & other groups must sustain something on it hope of it government.
— Ruel S Sarabosing, City of San Fernando

yes, with one sentence class can transaction to stop jueteng an direct to pay chief and ding-ding bang. signed by the president.
— ess, 56, metro cebu

No, it can not does it want to? Think it over. Ito ay isang Filipino ito ay pasan ko ng mga taon. Ang mga taong walang pera at gamit, it was hirap. Nauntikan.
— Eliseo E. Cruz, 28, Pasig

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Across the NATION

Graft prober of Batangas shot dead

BEACH EXERCISE
Members of Task Force Stingray, an elite Marine unit, conduct security exercises on Bancoran Island.

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—The resident Ombudsman of the Batangas provincial government was ambushed and killed by two unidentified armed men on his way to work in the downtown area of Batangas City early yesterday.

Chief Insp. Florendo Saligan, Batangas City police deputy chief, identified the victim as Guillermo Cortes, 57, of Barangay Cuenca and the local ombudsman officer of the Batangas capitol.

Saligan said the victim was on board his Toyota Corolla car (XKL 200) when the gunmen, on board a Kawasaki motorcycle, waylaid him near the memorial park at about 8:30 a.m. along the boundaries of barangays Bangkal and Sulsugan.

He said police investigation revealed that the assailants had trailed the victim's car from a traffic intersection in Barangay Kumintang Ibaba.

"When the [killers] saw the chance, they opened fire at the [victim as he] was approached a gasoline station," Saligan said in a media phone interview.

Police said the attackers had 45-cal. pistols.

Saligan said they were still investigating if the killing had something to do with the victim's job.

He said they would check if the victim was handling any high-profile case before he was killed.

Cortes was one of the reliable sources of information of the Inquirer on anomalies of certain provincial officials.

He was supposed to meet with the Inquirer today to provide information on the P426-million livestock project at the provincial capitol, which allegedly did not undergo the bidding process and was awarded to a construction firm allegedly owned by Gov. Armando Sanchez.

Cortes was also investigating the alleged scam in the declining allowances of the provincial government employees, a project that was reportedly awarded to a relative of Sanchez.

Sanchez flatly denied having knowledge of the killing of Cortes.

He laughed off reports that he was a culprit of an ongoing investigation being undertaken by Cortes's office regarding the alleged P500-million beautification project of the provincial capitol building.

Sanchez said he actually had no knowledge of the project.

"There is no truth to that. Mr. Cortes is not investigating me or my office for that supposed project. We don't have that kind of project because we don't have that kind of money," he said.

Sanchez said he had no reason to order the killing of anybody, especially Cortes, who he described as a close friend and fraternity brother in Batangas State University.

"Mr. Cortes was a fraternity university brother. Who would I want [to] kill?" he said. Abeline Antonio, with a report from Mei Magsino-Lubis, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Ex-antidrug chief shot in back dies in hospital

MAKATI CITY—The former chief of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency in Central Mindanao, whose shooting Friday morning in Sta. Cruz town in Davao del Sur reminded a mystery, died Sunday dawn due to complications in his vital internal organs.

Supt. Elmer Abraham, who was recently reassigned at the headquarters Mindanao police command, died at around 2:30 a.m. Sunday while undergoing treatment at the operating room of the Davao Doctor's Hospital.

Abraham took a bullet in the back which is still a puzzle to both police investigators and those present during the shooting.

Senior Insp. Danilo Dioquino, chief of the Sta. Cruz police station, said there were no witnesses.

But Dioquino said the attack could be an accident as it was possible one of the victim's two .45 cal. pistols accidentally went off.

Abraham, his wife Camilles, son, and two housemaids had dropped by a durian fruit stall along the national highway in Barangay Tibao in Sta. Cruz on Friday morning when the shooting happened.

But his wife suspected that the bullet was shot from a yellow Unmarked vehicle that had been tailing them from Davao City.

Supt. Ernesto Pelanes, Davao del Sur acting provincial police chief, said they have two witness who could attest that no other persons were around at the time Abraham was shot.

Pelanes said Senalin Unos, who owns the fruit stand, and her employee Lenard Elona, told investigators that it was a case of accidental firing. Anthony S. Alfaro, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Baguio dads seek subsidy to stop abuse of suspects

BAGUIO CITY—The city council has offered to subsidize the lawyers' fees of drug suspects to help shield them from police brutality and the extraction of confessions and information.

Councilor Isabelito Bulajacha, former Baguio prosecutor, said human rights lawyers have been clamored by the frequency by which the local police display suspected criminals before complainants and reporters.

"In many cases, police offer the suspects to their complainants for a beating. Because they are in front of the cameras, if these people had lawyers, then this display of brutality won't happen," Bulajacha said.

Councilor Jose Molintas, a human rights viewer, authored the proposed ordinance allocating up to P100,000 annually to guarantee detainees "competent and independent counsel" upon their arrest.

Bulajacha said the proposed ordinance complements the law that requires arresting officers to inform crime suspects of their rights.

Republic Act 7438 compels law enforcers to inform a suspect, "in a language known to and understood by him, of his rights to remain silent and to have competent and independent counsel, preferably of his own choice, who shall at all times be allowed to confer privately with the person arrested, detained or under custodial investigation."

These are rights that can only be waived in front of a lawyer, the Supreme Court said in its guidelines defining admissible court evidence.

The court said "neither a [National] Bureau of Investigation] agent nor the city legal officer can be considered an independent counsel for this purpose."

Bulajacha said he had encountered violations of detainees' rights during his stint as prosecutor, "although there is no record yet for me to speak of."

"Police often claim that they could not reach any public lawyers to assist their suspects, but I always suspect that it is their way of [stretching detention] to compel suspects to admit their [alleged guilt] or to extract more evidence," he said.

"I have been criticized for dropping cases filed by these police officers, but I had to take both sides [of the coin] and because rights play a big part [in my decisions as prosecutor]," Bulajacha said. Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Mayors summon colleague who bared 'jueteng' take

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The Pampanga Mayors League (PML) has summoned Apalit Mayor Tito Lacanilao to a meeting this week to shed light on his disclosure that he, like other officials in Pampanga, was accepting money from jueteng operations.

A PML official said Lacanilao's statements had peeved the mayors.

Lacanilao, the official said, also claimed that some mayors not only took jueteng payoffs but also asked for "advances" or payments ahead of the weekly schedules.

Lacanilao made the disclosure during an interview at local radio station dwBW in Pulilan.

"Lacanilao came in the station. He volunteered the information," Fernando Pangan, dwBW station manager, said of the circumstances surrounding Lacanilao's appearance in the morning talk show.

The mayor's statements came a week after the PML erased support for the all-out war of President Macapagal-Arroyo, Gen. Eduardo Ermita (provincial mate), against illegal gambling.

The PML's president is Lubao Mayor Dennis Pineda, the only son of suspected jueteng lord Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda. The President was one of the principal sponsors in the mayor's wedding.

Candidate Mayor Jerry Pelayo, spokesperson of the PML, declined to describe the reactions of Pineda, who is in the United States, or of his colleagues to Lacanilao's statements.

"We'd like to tell [our sentiments] to him tonight. We're suspending judgment until we talk to him. For all we know, Tito was just joking," Pelayo said.

Reached on Monday after two days of evading interviews from local reporters, Lacanilao told the inquirer that he was in his right mind when he "formally spoke" on the issue.

"I did not know if I hurt anybody [with my statements] but I simply told my problem as a mayor. I spoke in good faith. I wanted national officials to understand the plight of local executives," Lacanilao said. Nonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

TOKEN
British Ambassador to the Philippines Peter Bennigham receives a token from Brig.-Gen. Alberto Braganza, Southern Command chief, during the ambassador's visit to the Southcom headquarters in Zamboanga City recently. British military counterterrorism advisers are now into activities of the Jemaah Islamiyah.

ROUNDUP

Couple slain

LUCENA CITY—A KTV bar manager and her husband were shot dead by a riding-in-tandem duo in Barangay Dalahican at dawn on Thursday. Police identified the victims as Rowena Barrales, 31, officer in charge of Dawn KTV Bar, and her husband Crisostomo Jaena, 36, police said. Barrales and Jaena were residents of St. Agustine Village, Barangay Lourdes Norte. SPO2 Joselito Jawad and SPO1 Edgardo Noguera said that at about 4:30 a.m., May 26, the victims were headed for home on board a motorcycle when they were shot at close range with .45 cal. pistols by passengers on a white van. The killers immediately fled toward Quezon. Barangay tanod Bernard Quesada brought the victims to the J. P. Rizal Memorial Hospital where they died. Romelo Pasia, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

13 drug suspects held

STA. CRUZ, Laguna—Police arrested 13 suspects in a series of anti-illegal drug operations in the province from May 14 to May 27. The suspects, according to police reports, were caught either in possession or in control of drug paraphernalia and various amounts of suspected shabu in plastic sachets. Rolando Pasia, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Army officer back

ADELANO

LEGAZPI CITY—Former New People's Army guerrilla 1st Lt. Rolando Fabelino is now back in military service—this time, to promote the peace and development projects of the national government through information dissemination. Fabelino was the command operations officer of the Charlie Company of the 42nd Infantry Battalion based in Sorsogon back in Camarines Sur when he was captured by the NPA's Rolando Jurilla command in March 2004. He was held in captivity for six months and freed on August last year. He is now a civil-military operations officer. Fabelino said he deliberately chose to be a CMO staff member because he would like to help educate and even convince the people living in far-flung areas and the NPA supporters that the programs being implemented by the government were intended for their upliftment and economic development. He also intends to convince and encourage people in remote barangay to stop supporting the communist rebels and their programs. Fabelino was a cadre member of the Communist Party of the Philippines before he quit the movement. He pressed that if the talents and intelligence of communist rebels would be channeled with a new mindset of loving their country, they could help the country become progressive. Michael Lanzian, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Health cards distributed

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—A mining firm exploring copper and gold deposits in Tampakan, South Cotabato distributed PhilHealth cards to B'laan natives, residents within the province. Two barangay captains in the municipality of Tampakan received the cards during the launching of the health insurance program on Thursday initiated by Sagittarius Mines Inc. (SMI). The company has adopted education as a flagship program for natives residing in areas affected by its mining activities. Rolando Dela, community project coordinator, claimed that the company realized the need for health care benefits for humanitarian area. Most of the residents had depended on natural herbs and traditional knowledge to cure ailments due to lack of basic health services in the area.

Apolito Jusay, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Liquor ban revives boundary dispute

BAMANGAN, Benguet—Three townspeople here—Balalahak, Bedeng Bello and Dominick—are poised to claim that they are the town's most peaceful villagers for observing an ordinance that bans drinking and sale of liquor.

But recently, Balalahak can now lose the tables these establishments decided to defy the ordinance by resuming selling liquor and allowing their customers to drink.

The reason, claimed owners of Jomy's canteen (Jomby's) store, Remy's store and Bonrgh's canteen' store, is that their businesses are located outside Balalahak and within Cuba, an adjacent village.

Cuba does not have a liquor ban ordinance.

As a result, the dispute has evolved a boundary scuffle between officials of Cuba and Balalahak, Mayor Eugelio Leon said.

Leon said he was at a loss over whether to issue the three stores business permits to sell liquor.

He said the disputes was still unresolved at the town council.

The store owners—Jomy Albio, Remy Bonito and Geoffrey Bolong—approved the purpose of Balalahak's ordinance, but they said their stores were not part of the barangay's jurisdiction.

Balalahak barangay chair Alex Mesiato said the three stores are within his barangay's jurisdiction. Hence, he said, they must abide by the ordinance.

Cuba barangay chair Marites Peterson observed, saying the boundary problem must be settled first.

Leon said that despite the boundary conflict, the liquor ban ordinances in the three barangays had helped improve the local peace and order situation.

Senior Insp. Gabriel Dalbo, town police chief, said the ordinances could a lot of peace and law for the 36-member police force. The townsmen cover for 15 barangays.

"There are no more shooting, physical injury cases or other forms of public disturbances caused by drinking liquor in the three areas since the ban took effect," Dalbo said.

Balalahak, Bedeng and Dominick opened up joined Choi millionaire in 2001 with identical provisions...that all neighborhood stores are prohibited from selling liquor and from allowing their customers to drink. —Dalmar Cariño, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

New PMA graduate killed in reb attack

TABUAC, Isabela—Two soldiers, including a fresh graduate of the Philippine Military Academy were killed, while another was wounded when suspected New People's Army rebels attacked an Army detachment in Tabuac town on Sunday night.

Killed were Lt. Victor Medrano and Pfc. Medrel Urbanizan, both of the 86th Infantry Battalion.

Wounded was Pfc. Nazario Adlaon.

Lt. Mike Tanggoan, 86th IB spokesperson, said the rebel attack was in retaliation to the Army's surprise attack on an NPA camp in Sitio Libas, Barangay Bliss Nor in Lantrez on Thursday night.

Two rebels were killed during the clash. —Abe I. Pasion, PDI Mindanao Bureau

VANTAGE POINT

Residents of Catanauan town in Eastern Samar line up on a hill to get a better vantage point with which to view the arrival of President Macapagal-Arroyo during Ms. Arroyo's second visit to the remote town.

ILOCOS TOWN STANDOFF

Woman stopped from blowing up market

LAOAG CITY—Policemen on Monday halted an attempt of a 25-year-old woman to explode a hand grenade she was holding during a 15-minute standoff that began at the public market of Bacarra, Ilocos Norte and ended at the town hall a few meters away.

The woman, a former sales clerk at a department store, rushed up at the market at 8:30 a.m. Monday and took out a grenade while she was in the middle of what appeared to be a heated conversation with another person at her mobile phone, police said.

Dressed in jogging pants and red sweatshirt, the woman, described by police as "emotionally disturbed," was overheard by market goers as saying, "I will blow up this grenade if you don't show up."

The Governor Medina, Bacarra police chief, said policemen went to the public market upon receiving calls for assistance.

They, however, caught up with the woman at the nearby plaza in front of the municipal hall.

They intervened as the town hall [when we arrived] and started climbing up and down the stairs causing panic among [town hall] workers," Medina said in a phone interview.

He said government employees rushed out of the building while others locked themselves in their offices when they saw the woman running on the hallway.

Medina said he ordered his men to remove when the woman started hesitating the grenade in policemen who tried to get near her.

"I instructed a sniper to disable the woman by shooting her leg should she refuse to give up the grenade she was holding," he said.

Medina said he started negotiating with the woman to surrender when she reached an area near the police station.

At some point during the negotiation, policemen who were positioned behind the woman grabbed her and disarmed her grenade.

Medina said they detained the woman and asked government doctors to examine her.

Investigation showed that the woman was waiting for her boyfriend who supposedly promised to share up or the market and pay her P40,000 that he had borrowed.

The woman went berserk when her boyfriend refused to meet her and pay up his debt.

The woman told police that she got the grenade from her boyfriend's apartment.

According to Medina, the woman may have been in a state of emotional distress.

Policemen were preparing charges of illegal possession of explosives and alarm and scandal against the woman. —Cristina Arradaza, PhilStarNorthern Luzon Bureau

Captors release former top NPA leader; military cleared

LAGUNA CITY—The captors of former New People's Army leader Ramonchito "Ahmar" Garcia surrendered to authorities yesterday at Camp Vicente Lim in Sta. Rosa City.

But the former top NPA officer in the Bicolano Peninsula, who was reported Saturday morning, absolved the military.

"I think my captors are not military men despite wearing some of them uniforms resembling [those] of the military," he said.

Garcia said his captors tried to extract from him information on the underground movement.

"They were obviously fishing for information. But they didn't get anything from me. Besides, it has been 10 years now since I left the movement to raise my family. I have nothing to tell them," he said between pulls of cigarettes, still shaken by the abduction.

His captors did not harm him, according to Garcia.

He said he noticed that on Sunday, the group suddenly changed the way they dealt with him.

"They began to treat me lightly. I didn't know why. But I could sense that they were going to release me. It brought me hope to see my family again."

Police said that the business reported his abduction on Sunday. Garcia let out a deep sigh of relief. "Now I know. I heard my abduction talking about a particular sense," he recalled.

He said the group abducted him to sign a prepared handwritten document declaring his support for the government.

After he was thrown into a Tamaraw FX's van the day he was snatched in Malabon town, Garcia said he was immediately blindfolded and handcuffed. All his personal items were taken.

"After an hour, I knew that we were in the vicinity of Cavite. They brought me to their safe house where my interrogation took place and if they decided to set me free in San Pablo City," he said.

Garcia said all his personal items were returned by his abductors. —Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Laguna city council OKs ₱1-M reward for mayor's killers

STA. ROSA CITY—The cop-town-CD of Sta. Rosa recently approved a P1-million bounty for the immediate capture of the suspects in the killing of Mayor Leon Arcillas.

In its 19th council meeting held on May 16, the council unanimously voted for the allocation of the lofty sum to hasten the investigation and arrest of the masterminds.

The resolution was signed by eight regular members of the council, including presiding officer and Vice Mayor Arlene Arcillas-Bascara, the daughter of the slain mayor.

It was authored by Councilors Alexis Gomez Jr. and Hermes Patrolita.

The resolution was approved by Arcillas-Bascara and Mayor Jose Catindig Jr.

It said P500,000 would be awarded to anyone with information that will lead to the identification of the "principal suspects" and the case is filed in the court and it gives the necessary conviction number."

The other half of the reward will be given to the informant when the suspects are finally convicted by the court.

The resolution said the reward money will come from the city government's "intelligence fund."

Arcillas, a staunch supporter of President Macapagal-Arroyo, and his security aide, PO2 Erwin Bravo, were gunned down at the hallway of the second floor of the city hall minutes minutes after he officiated a civil wedding on the morning of May 10.

The Philippine National Police has formed the Special Investigation Task Force Arcillas to lead the investigation of the killings.

The task force has tagged communist rebels as primary suspects. The Southern Tagalog-based Melito Glor Command of the communist New People's Army has denied the accusation.

The FBI's here pointed to the intelligence unit of the Armed Forces of the Philippines as being behind the killings. —Marlon Ramos, PhilStarSouthern Luzon Bureau

1948 law says it's Ozamiz, not Ozamis

OZAMIZ CITY—How it can be settled.

Based on official records, the correct spelling of this city's name is "Ozamiz."

According to Vice Mayor Carlos Bernad, they have obtained an authenticated photocopy of Republic Act No. 523 from the National Library recently.

RA 523 is the law that granted the city its charter that took effect July 15, 1948. It decreed the reinstating of the old town of Misamis in honor of the late Sen. Jose Ozamiz, a World War II hero.

Ozamiz, a son of a taipan from Bicolano, Spain, served Misamis Occidental as its first governor and delegate in framing the 1935 Constitution.

A native of Misamis town, Ozamiz was the late politician from the province to have climbed a historic seat.

Bernad said with the official record as basis, the spelling controversy that has lasted for over 50 years would be finally over.

The city council has passed a resolution urging all individuals and institutions to spell the city's name correctly. —Jose Arnaldo, PhilStarMindanao Bureau

New health chief told: Be clear on 'Ligtas Buntis'

By Hector P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Incoming Health Secretary Francisco Duque III should be clear on his position on the government's "Ligtas Buntis" program and on reproductive health issues, said Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman.

"At best, he is ambivalent [on the program]. He do not know if he is in favor or against it because he seems to be doing a balancing act," Lagman said responses have on Friday.

Duque, who will formally replace outgoing Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit, should clearly state whether he is in favor of the program, he said.

"Duque should be firm and not vacillate on crucial issues like family planning and reproductive health," said Lagman, author of House Bill 3773 or the "Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Management Act of 2005."

Consultations

Duque earlier said in an interview that the program would be "[a] reviewed before the health department would decide if it would be continued.

He said the continuation of the program would also be decided after consultations had been conducted with legislators, bishops, Catholic Church leaders and employees of his department.

The Catholic Church has condemned Ligtas Buntis for allegedly promoting artificial family planning in support of the government's birth control program.

Campaign

The Church is also expected to launch a campaign against House Bill 3773, which is expected to be tackled in plenary sessions before Congress adjourns on June 10.

Lagman expressed confidence that the bill would pass the House with the majority of the lawmakers supporting the bill.

"We will closely watch what happens in the Senate," he said.

Expected opposition

He said he expected the Church to oppose the bill. "I only ask them not to misrepresent the facts."

The legislator said he received reports that provisions of the bill had been changed in campaigning waged by the Catholic Church to block passage of the bill.

"We can differ in our views but don't misrepresent ... just tell the truth to the public," said Lagman.

Population management advocates are gearing for a campaign to push for the passage of the bill, said Rita Fenaris, deputy executive director of the Population Commission.

She said they seemed to bring out the issues amid the expected campaign of the Church against the bill.

"Their (Church's) position is given. We will just continue to provide the public and population management advocates with evidence based evidence on the issues," said Ventura.

RP economy shows resilience

end of the National Statistical Coordination Board, said rising prices of oil and consumer goods, more imports and exports, and a decline in output from the farm and mining sectors dampened economic growth in the first quarter.

"The growth in the economy was supported by the steady increases in services and industry," Mirasol said.

Even so, the government is hoping to achieve the lower end of its full-year growth target of 5.5-6.5 percent.

The agriculture department is expecting a 3.4 percent growth for the farm sector for 2005, he added.

Agriculture grows 4 percent, the economy is likely to attain the low end of the government's full-year growth target, although the result growth in exports is a downside risk factor," Neri said.

Main driver

The services sector, which makes up 46 percent of GDP, was the main driver of economic growth in the first three months, rising 6.8 percent from a year earlier and a seasonally adjusted 2.6 percent to the first three months of the year.

The growth of the industry sector slowed to 4.2 percent from 4.7 last year, but it shrank a seasonally adjusted 1.2 percent in the previous quarter, its weakest performance in four years, due to a sluggish mining sector.

The agriculture sector, which makes up a fifth of GDP, suffered from a series of storms in late 2004 and struggled to recover in the first three months of this year even as the dry El Niño weather phenomenon added to its difficulties.

Neri said the agriculture, fisheries and forestry sector contracted 0.1 percent in the first quarter, a substantial decline from the 9.0 percent growth in the same period last year.

Exports have been sluggish, growing just 3.6 percent in the year through the first quarter, due to faltering demand by Philippine electronic products and sales of goods.

Despite the slowdown in GDP growth, analysts noted that the Philippine economy showed resilience in the face of high oil prices and a battered baht sector.

"The markets should be encouraged by the numbers. It's not a big surprise but it was a healthy increase," said Daniel Gutor, director of forecasting at Action Economics in Singapore.

"The agriculture sector was not as big a drag as people had feared," Gutor said.

Jonathan Tarobias, a market strategist at Banco de Oro Universal Bank, said the ride was "changing in favor of the Philippines, especially after the upgrades of the outlook of the sovereign credit ratings."

Last week, Fitch Ratings said it revised its outlook on the Philippines' long-term foreign and local currency ratings to stable from negative following the enactment of several tax measures aimed at widening the country's yawning budget deficit.

Analysts, however, said the expansion of higher taxes could push growth below target.

GNP growth

The country's gross national product (GNP), which includes income from overseas investments and remittances from overseas Filipino workers, dived to 4.7 percent in the first quarter from 6.4 percent during the same period last year.

But better income from abroad grew by 6.7 percent, slower than the 7.4-percent pace in the first quarter of last year.

Neri said oil prices that began rising since the second half of last year had pushed inflation over the comfort level and dampened buying by consumers.

Even so, economists have been supported by solution strong flows of remittances from millions of overseas workers, who sent home $2.3 billion in the first three months of this year.

"Inflows from remittances of overseas Filipino workers will support the economy for the rest of the year," said Julius Wee, an economist at ING-Baring in Singapore.

Neri said reduced government spending in the face of a looming fiscal crisis also contributed to the economic slowdown. Government consumption recorded a 0.9-percent drop during the period, after posting a 5.1-percent growth in the first quarter of 2004.

But the government's chief economist said an improvement in the country's fiscal position would help push the economy forward.

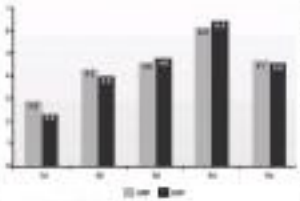
"It's pain for the short run, but gain on the long run," Neri said.

Prior to de Vera, an economist from the University of Asia and the Pacific, said the deceleration in the country's economy should be viewed from the perspective of a slowdown in the global economy expected this year.

"There is a perception from many economists that there will be a decline in world economic growth because oil prices are expected to remain high, and because of that, people will conserve less," De Vera said in an interview.

He said the Philippines should be able to achieve a 5.3-growth in GDP this year if the government executed its fiscal reform program. With reports by AFP and Reuters

GDP & GNP growth rates (1st quarter of 2001 to 2005)



Source: National Statistical Coordination Board

Explain Boracay project, lawmakers ask AFP brass

a government call for both fighting and clients of lack of essential needs for troops in the battlefield.

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero said AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Efren Abu should explain whether the private individuals who purportedly gave money for the project in return received favors.

Rep. Rolin Golez, chair of the House committee on national defense, said he would question Abu today at a hearing on the planned military modernization to find out about the resort project's specifics and if Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz knew about it.

Malapascua Rep. Rafael Mariano added: "Which one? A body spa salon?"

Scale model

An Inquirer reporter visited the resort on May 15, a month after the "soft opening" following the completion of 16 rooms. When completed, the resort would consist of two three-story buildings with 56 air-conditioned rooms each, a beach-shaped swimming pool and a separate one house for senior officers, according to a scale model of the complex.

Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, AFP Central Command chief, said the hotel was planned to boost troop morale and assist the wife and recreational needs of soldiers, military soldiers and their families.

AFP spokesperson said the project was being financed by donations by businessmen, retirees and civilians. The donors invited the Batangas Ng dagat Resort in Bauhinan (BRR), a group formed from businessmen. Little was known about the project in Camp Aguinaldo, according to sources there interviewed by the Inquirer.

"What's wrong with having a donated world-class military resort in Boracay island?" AFP Deputy Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Ishmael Abdulmalik asked in a Tuesday interview in Zamboanga City.

He said the project was contemplated and initiated by "the donors and organized by the AFP. He said the final structure would depend on donations.

"The resort is one of the two projects launched after Abu took over the Armed Forces last October that have sparked criticism of the military hierarchy. The other was the renovation of sidewalks in Camp Aguinaldo.

Disheartening

"It is very disheartening to see that it's not just the administration but also the AFP leadership that is insensitive to the suffering of our countrymen," Escudero said.

"If instead they were able to raise money and did not use government funds, they should have used it for soldiers' homes and not in this way of giving pleasure for their own selves," he said.

The AFP's Boracay resort will surely further widen the cracks within the already fractious military—among the officers themselves and between them and their enlisted men.

SOLDIERS training in Boracay: This time, a project for rest and recreation. AFP

Aguinaldo's sidewalks, saying it was "unnecessary and misdirected."

"There is nothing new with debates and guilt-ridden projects in the AFP. This is the latest controlling grievance of the Oakwood mutineers," Mariano said, referring to the failed coup in Makati City two years ago.

Unconscionable luxury

Rep. Vincent Crisologo (NPC, Davao City), vice chair of the House committee on national defense, said the resort was an "unconscionable luxury."

Cagayan de Oro Rep. Rodolfo Uma-li Gaiana, Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo and Rep. Antonio Tinio (Party-list Coalition) said soldiers in Mindanao do not get their hazardous allowances.

"It's saddening that while the government has been earnestly calling for austere use of public funds, the Armed Forces is undertaking a luxury project that will benefit only their officers. The Armed Forces should instead embark on projects to uplift the conditions of our soldiers and provide our unarmed security," Carmona, PGCA report from Aden A. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau reports

RP 99% 'jueteng'-free? Rosales not amused

Police, Mindanao bet?

Asked to bet a gambling man, Manila Archbishop Cardinal Jaime Sin was not stunned by the pronouncement.

"I don't want to criticize, but they should know better than to make statements like that," Bautista told reporters on Sunday at the Manila Cathedral.

PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao, himself suspected of overseeing monthly jueteng payola, announced last week that he could file more head allowed charged with the underground lottery game nationwide.

To back his claim, Lomibao had asked field commanders to submit "certified lists" signed by local Church leaders. Such certification was supposed to prove that jueteng had indeed been wiped out in an area.

Rosales worried people not to try anything for his opinion.

"They will be shamed if they tell me," he said in Filipino, pointing out that the PNP announcement was probably true—but only "in part."

"You know, [jueteng] is a commodity, it's part of a dirty culture," Rosales explained. "In other words, you don't just eradicate.... a bad habit."

Solving the problem, he said, would require the Church to educate people and convince them to abandon the multibillion game in charity, a lucrative source of money for unscrupulous politicians and policemen.

Above all, there must be a change in values [and] positive values," the prelate said. "The mentality has to be changed."

Lumen officially jueteng-free

The whole of Luzon is now officially "jueteng-free," former Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, PNP spokesperson, said yesterday.

Bataoil added, the only territory which failed to submit a certification, signed by the mayor and parish priest or leader of the dominant religion, that their area had been cleared of the vice.

Lomibao names and cities submitted their certifications on Friday, enabling Public Affairs to safely move one immediately transmitted to the PNP.

Really, there's no jueteng

Over the weekend, Chief Supt. Florante Torres, chief of the PNP Special Anti-Illegal Gambling Task Force, said the group continued to receive reports of operable jueteng operations in several areas in Luzon and Metro Manila.

He identified the areas as Barrios in Quezon City, San Pablo City in Laguna, and the boundary of Bigaa and Bulacan.

"But we found no jueteng there," he said.

Executive Supts and the task force was verifying reports of continued jueteng operations in Naruguhi, Batangas.

Jueteng by text

But the following Magbalodon ng Pilipinas merely laughed off the PNP's pronouncements, insisting that jueteng operations continued in Luzon.

Gambling lords had devised ways to get around the crackdown on the illegal numbers game, this time with the use of text messaging, claimed Ocampo, EMO for provincial chapters, e-mail, had been closely monitoring developments of the government's anti-jueteng campaign.

"In the Ramos regime and the Gordillera Administration, [jueteng operations still] continue, but then time the betting is through text," EMO information officer Carl Ma said in an e-mail.

The peasants and fishers took care of the collection system, he said.

'Try Tokeng'

In Central Luzon, people included betting, he said.

In this game, the winning number is based on the winning lotto numbers aired on TV.

"It is said to be emerging Central Luzon today," Ma said.

The EMO heralded the PNP's efforts as "found bid solutions."

If no jueteng lord or protector has been caught, how can the PNP declare that a province or a region is jueteng free, the group said.

Just say no

For jueteng to stop, local officials must say no to the protection money offered by jueteng operators.

This is the clarion call of a non-governmental organization working to eradicate the illegal numbers game which led to the dismissal of President Joseph Estrada, and which now threatens the seven administration.

Gary David, executive director of Kilusang ng Bayan Laban sa Jueteng, an NGO chaired by Archbishop Oscar Cruz, explained that jueteng operations existed the country "based on three legs: There are the operators, the police or military and the local officials."

"If one of the legs is broken, then the whole operation crumbles. It's important to make jueteng operations difficult in any area because this will force the operators to move elsewhere. Getting local officials to say no to protection money is the surest way of achieving this," David said.

Domino effect

He explained that if local officials pledged to refuse protection money offered by jueteng operators, heads of local police in each municipality corresponding to the area would be forced to do the same, or risk getting transferred.

"If a local official says no and the chief of police will still accept the protection money, this will create some tension between the two," David said.

But in the end, he said, it was the local officials who had the upper hand because they controlled the assignment of their local police officers.

David also said that if a local official refused the protection money, jueteng would not automatically stop "but cabo and ex-tenator (collector) will not be able to issue much in that area."

P36.8 industry

He also revealed that protection money, called intelligence, could range from P50,000 a month for municipalities to P4 million a month for governors of larger provinces. An estimated that jueteng could reach P36 billion a year.

Jueteng, according to David, is a P36 billion-a-year industry.

He dismissed claims made by the PNP that Metro Manila and the whole of Luzon were already jueteng-free.

Based on reports from Rosales Chronicle, "[Jueteng] never stopped," David said.

Question of the Week

What do you think should be done to some top government and police officials accused of receiving huge amounts of jueteng money?

Senders of e-text [illegible] *will be published in Tuesday's* InqBox *and, until recess as "Inquirer Mail!*

Have your inquirer shows name/agency/message.
Text your answers to 2327 (Globe) or 283 (Smart).
(Maximum of 160 characters)
*Globe/Smart subscribers can text. Log on to 0372327.
Promotional schemes can text.
Inquirer.net home/agency/mailing addresses
In 2327 or 283 so their voices will be entered in their*

6 Nigerians nabbed in dollar scams

By Margaux C. Ortiz

SIX NIGERIANS allegedly involved in counterfeiting operations were arrested separately in Manila and Pasay City over the weekend.

National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) agents arrested two of the Nigerians after a real estate broker was nearly duped into accepting $1 million in counterfeit United States currency.

The suspects were identified as Freeman Kingsley and Mark Kenneth, residing in Pasay and Manila, respectively. The foreigners were apprehended in an entrapment operation over the weekend at the Manila Hotel.

According to a report of the NBI's Anti-Graft Division, Kingsley offered to invest $1 million in the real estate business of complainant Wenito Estevez.

On one occasion, Kingsley allegedly showed Estevez a bag containing bundles of black paper, which the Nigerian claimed was his payment.

The paper was coated with an unknown substance, which allegedly reacts in a special solution supplied by Kingsley, according to NBI Anti-Graft Division head Manuel Eduarte.

Kingsley claimed that when the black paper was soaked in "555 Automatic Solution," the black coating would dissolve and the paper would look like a real $1,000 bill.

Kingsley demonstrated this in Dalmont and successfully exchanged the bill for Philippine currency in a money changer shop, Eduarte said.

The Nigerian then told Dalmont that a special investment, secured by a Libyan diplomat, can multiply the dissolved in proper money.

He reportedly asked the broker for $75,000 to pay the diplomat for the cost of the machine. Kingsley then left the paper bundles in Dalmont's possession.

Dalmont sought the bureau's help upon realizing that something was wrong. NBI agents accompanied Dalmont on a last-hour entrapment scheme the Nigerians arranged a meeting.

NBI operatives recovered the bag containing bundles of black paper marked with a "Bank of America" seal.

Hurnell denied the allegations, saying that Kingsley just asked him to escort his fellow Nigerian to the restaurant.

"I don't do this type of business," Hurnell said in a press conference.

When asked to present their travel documents, Hurnell was able to produce his passport and other papers. Kingsley however failed to present his passport, claiming that he had lost it.

In a separate operation, the Western Police District arrested four Nigerians on Saturday on the complaint of Josefina Espino, 45, a businesswoman from Sta. Cruz, Manila.

The four Nigerians, Friday Wonder, Bonita Agbaegbu, Ujeni Igbonam and Henry Ghosa Nwosu, are now facing investigation for violation of Republic Act 8484, or the Access Devices Regulation Act of 1998.

Initial investigation showed that Igbonam had asked Espino for an order of one container van of welding rods worth P9.9 million.

After making delivery arrangements, the suspects asked Espino to talk to their agent on the phone for the payment.

Briter said a man who identified himself as the finance minister of Nigeria talked to Espino and asked for her bank account number so that he could deposit the payment.

However, the woman received a call from another man, claiming to be a diplomat from Nigeria.

The man told Espino that he had a package from the Nigerian finance minister.

But the caller insisted that she pay $1,800 for airway bills.

Sensing something was amiss, the victim sought police assistance that led to the arrest of the four foreigners in an entrapment operation.

Policemen recovered a box containing bundles of cut black papers and chemicals, an instruction manual and a $100 bill believed to be fake. — With Mike Morales, trainee

Elevated U-turn slot on C5 Road

By Lelia B. Salaverria

THE METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority's proposal for an elevated U-turn slot would be adopted for the traffic problem on C5 Kalentong Avenue intersection in Makati City, according to the agency chair Bayani Fernando.

Fernando said he and officials of the Department of Public Works and Highways had agreed to implement the MMDA's design instead of an underground tunnel to change the public works engineers were proposing.

Not urgent

But the MMDA chair was also quick to say that there was no immediate need for the flyover.

"The elevated U-turn slot is not urgent. We could lower to the old U-turn scheme and then can work for more green space," he said yesterday in an interview after a Manila Rotarians.

The U-turn scheme at the US. Ambassador interchange previously implemented by the MMDA had been suspended by the Makati City government.

Makati closure

Makati closed the MMDA U-turn slot and returned the use of traffic lights.

Under the MMDA scheme, a portion of the intersection is closed and vehicles would have to make a U-turn on another road to cross to the other side.

The MMDA is proposing to construct only one elevated on each of the arteries.

DNA EVIDENCE: police at round the body of one of two suspects killed in yesterday's robbery in Manila.

2 robbers killed, 2 others get away with loot

A TEAM from the Police Anti-Crime Emergency Response Force (PACER) engaged alleged robbers in a shootout yesterday afternoon in Manila, killing two suspects.

The suspects had just allegedly held employees of a shipping company near the Delpan Bridge.

The suspects, who remained unidentified as of press time, were killed in the shootout.

Police identified the robbery victims as Mr. Villegas, Gothong Shipping Lines' administrative officer for finance, and Lorenzo Pagador, the company driver.

Pagador told inspector that they were about to deposit money in the Equitable PCI Bank Delpan branch when the suspects intercepted the latter at about 12:30 p.m.

The driver said he had no idea how much cash they were carrying.

Insp. Rodito Dador of Pacer-NCR said they received a tip that robbers were about to rob the Gothong Shipping Lines office near Delpan Bridge.

Dador said Pacer immediately dispatched a team to confirm the information.

While the team was riding a multicab vehicle (XRJ-612), a Mitsubishi Lancer (PU-INCU-954) suddenly cut the multicab's path.

Dador said four men got out of the car and held Villegas at gunpoint, seizing from her two small bags containing the cash.

A brief gunfight ensued between the Pacer operatives and the robbers, killing two.

But Dador said two other suspects were able to escape with the undetermined amount of cash.

Dador said nobody from the police team was hurt.

Police recovered an M-16 rifle, three rifle magazines and were investigating whether it was the same rifle used in the robbery.

According to Dador, the suspects were members of the Apayang gang, who are known to operate in Central and Southern Luzon. — Margaux C. Ortiz and Mike Morales, trainee

Lawyer on the defensive

By Tara V. Quintanilla

FROM defender to defendant.

One lawyer's career has taken such a turn after a water pressure bucket fans off to court for allegedly falsifying public documents in his defense of a client in a 19-year-old murder case.

Lawyer Nilfredo Ting, 45, is on trial at the Makati Metropolitan Trial Court for allegedly presenting to court a false document in his attempt to absolve former policeman Dominador Gonzales of murder charges.

Former PVR aide

Gonzales had been charged with the May 1990 killing of Bienvenido Rodriguez, a former security guard of former President Fidel V. Ramos, in Sen. Tito, Cavite.

The case is being handled by State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco before the sala of Makati Regional Trial Court Judge Jesus de Leguillas.

Fake manifesto

Witness filed the criminal case against Ting as he alleged the lawyer conspired with his client to produce a manifesto of support for the former President.

The manifesto also showed that Gonzales had signed the document along with Rodriguez in an attempt to belie that they had died.

The document was presented during trial in February. — With Dan Rino Barong, trainee

Gov't hospitals treat patients like doormats

HUNDREDS of thousands of tenants of the hospitals were probably sitting dazed and smoking as they read a front page article yesterday. The report told of the dehumanizing treatment that patients at the Philippine Memorial Hospital suffer at the hands of doctors, nurses and health workers.

Manila hospital is behind the Central Market in Sta. Cruz, Manila. It delivers scores of babies of poor and pregnant women every day.

Here's one sickening dialogue between a doctor and a patient at Manila, as reported in that article:

"Hoy sa sunod." Shouted the doctor to the next patient.

"Doctor, ano ang gagawin ko sa akin?" Asked the patient.

"Wala! Ipanganak mo na 'yan!" Answered the doctor

METRO

Lino Dave G. Dipasupil

SINCE 1993

Arroceros Park an archeological site

By Tina S. Santos

ENVIRONMENTALISTS fighting to preserve nature at the Arroceros Forest Park in Manila have found new reason to stop the construction of a building in the site—the area is an archeological heritage site as declared by the National Museum in 1992.

Members of the Wetner Foundation, the group taking care of the 2.1-hectare property, believe that this little-known fact could be used to compel Manila officials to stop constructing a building inside the nature sanctuary.

In April 2003, National Museum director Corazon Alvina wrote Wetner president Regina Palafox, urging them were "strong archaeological indications and evidence that the park is rich in archaeological heritage."

Alvina said that was based on archaeological excavations in nearby sites like the Bichara Garden, Metropolitan Theater (building, and the Government Service Insurance System compounds.

Diggings yielded significant cultural artifacts that reflect human occupations and burials dated from the 16th to the 18th centuries, Alvina said.

"Based on Section 2, Letter J of [1] 374, as amendment to RA 4846, otherwise known as 'The Cultural Properties Preservation and Protection Act,' the Arroceros Forest Park is [sic] with designation as an archaeological site," Alvina said in the letter.

According to Che Nuno, a Wetner member, ancient shards have been found in the area since 1993, and just last Sunday three and they found pieces of 16th and 17th century shards in areas that have been dug up by workers.

"We found pottery porcelain and ceramics we believe belonged to different Chinese dynasties," she said.

"As an archaeological site, as soon as you for excavating, digging must be stopped and care over the area to the National Museum," she added.

Prior to the park's declaration as an archaeological site, Wetner Sampedro, chief of the Human Remains Archaeology Division, said numerous and rich archaeological materials were found in the forest park.

"... [These materials] are useful to generate archaeological data for the proper learning, wisdom and appreciation of the country's archaeological heritage..." Sampedro said.

Tonight for comment, Dr. Ma. Luisa Quinones, Manila Division of City Schools superintendent, said they had been told that the entire property was not an archaeological site.

"We will still proceed with the project. We will just access a [indiscernible] the National Museum," Quinones said.

Man in cop's uniform kills two over curses

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

BILLETS to coma.

Jorel Dave Gubetia, 17, was on a tricycle with his friends the other night when an oncoming black Honda CRV nearly hit them in Pasig City, police said.

He threw some curses. The car stopped.

A man in a police uniform and a camouflage jacket got out of the car and walked toward Gubetia.

Without a word, the stranger pulled out a gun and shot the boy in the forehead, PO1 Fernan Atanacio said in his report.

The killer and a companion later shot to death Gubetia's companion, Jo Alvin dela Cruz, 17.

The suspects even opened fire at three other teenagers on the tricycle, but these managed escape by their lives.

Dela Cruz was driving the tricycle on Manalo Avenue in Bacoor, Cavite, at 11:45 p.m. Sunday when the car nearly hit them.

Patricio Gubetia, who was seated behind Dela Cruz, allegedly shouted invectives.

"Pagdating ang sasakyan sa kanyang[illegible] pa?" witnesses quoted Gubetia.

The car stopped in front of the tricycle. The man in police uniform got off and walked toward the group of teenagers.

He shot Gubetia before continuously walking back to the car.

But then he and a companion got out of the CRV and went back to the tricycle. This time both men reportedly shot Dela Cruz.

Three friends ran as the killers also opened fire at them, witnesses said.

Investigators at the crime scene recovered 11 empty shells, some of which were 9mm x .45-cal. pistol.

Caloocan employees receive ₱25-M bonus

By Nancy C. Carvajal

ECHEVERI

AN A REBATE of higher revenue collection, Caloocan City employees have received their mid-year bonus earlier this year in time for the opening of classes.

"Close to 25[illegible] million were released to augment the employees' money for tuition fee and school supplies," said Mayor Enrico Echeveri.

Most 2,600 City Hall employees benefited from the early disbursement which resulted from high revenue collection, the mayor said.

The city, according to Echeveri, collected ₱937.2 million in revenue during the first quarter of the year.

The amount was ₱[illegible] million higher than the ₱686.7 million collected last year.

Echeveri added that the early release of the fund was also his way of showing his gratitude to the employees who worked hard to help the city achieve its goal of higher tax and revenue take.

In the past, the mayor said, bonuses were released between the months of June and July or even in August or September.

The mayor added that the early release of the bonus would prevent employees from working weeks from last chaotic.

"Most of the time employees get buried in debt before they receive their money," the mayor said.

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POC seeking Fiba nod for country's national fives

By Marang B. Castillo

THE PHILIPPINE Olympic Committee has not asked the international basketball federation (Fiba) to withdraw recognition of the suspended Basketball Association of the Philippines (BAP), but the sports body wants Fiba-International to recognize and accept Philippine teams the POC will send to Fiba-sanctioned tournaments while the BAP is under suspension.

These points were stressed by POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco in a letter to Fiba president Carl Ching Menkiy. The Olympic body also informed Ching of the BAP suspension and asked for the support of the world's sage body.

"We did everything by the book," Cojuangco told Ching in his letter. "The BAP (adjusted) due process and the POC expects no less from the International Federation."

In a press statement, Cojuangco said the POC did not ask the Fiba to withdraw its recognition of the BAP but to recognize the teams that will be fielded by the (POC)-working committee while (the) BAP is serving suspension.

In a unanimous decision, the BAP was indefinitely suspended by the POC General Assembly last week following a controversial election.

The POC head said the BAP failed to comply with fundamental agreements forged in a pact with the major stakeholders of basketball last month.

A caretaker committee, with Cojuangco as chair, has since taken over BAP functions.

A decision by the POC-organized basketball committee to form a new and strongest national team to the Stanko (Southeast Asian Basketball Association) tournament later this month in Singapore was a key issue which the BAP had repudiated.

The battle is a qualifier to the Fiba-Asia men's championship in Doha, Qatar, this September where the top two teams gain entry to the world championship next year in Japan.

The country wants to host the next Fiba-Asia contest in 2007 which will crowned the top two teams, aside from China, of automatic entry in the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Meanwhile, the BAP has been given 24 hours by the Philippine Sports Commission to justify its continued stay at the Rizal Memorial Complex.

The PSC is subscribing action after being formally informed by the POC of the BAP's suspension Friday last week.

"We are giving you 24 hours to answer in order for the Commission to exercise independent judgment," Guillermo Iroy, the PSC executive director, wrote the BAP yesterday.

Iran eclipses RP sacking of Indian five

By Francis Dobua

WALIENG into the court a preordained winner, Iran-Gaba Barrery wasted no time sending a message to the rest of the field, spanking a visibly overmatched Indian side, 94-58, yesterday in the FedEx 16th Busan Asian Championships Cup at the Asiatown Coliseum.

SALZADO: Vikram Sargay (13) and Rajasekaran Sargai pressure a RP's Ahmed Ahkmad during their game last night.

Although India hardly presented enough of a challenge for anyone to measure Iran's true strength, the fact that it had already played the Philippines provided observers with a basis for comparison.

The Asia Miguel-Philippines squad crushed India on opening day, 91-49.

"Obviously, it's a very strong team," national coach Chot Reyes said of the Iranians.

But Iran wasn't the only team to make an impression.

Qatar debuted yesterday in stern hung fashion, taking an early 20-9 lead and never looking back on the way to a 101-44 drubbing of the United Arab Emirates in the first game.

Like India, UAE dropped its second game in as many matches.

Mohammed Ishwas Abdulla led Qatar with 26 points and 17 boards, 12 off the offensive glass.

The Iran variant, the second for the oil-rich Islamic country in this tournament, put it in the early lead and cut it up for a smooth-watering showdown against the all-pro Filipinos.

"We're going to need our outside shooting," said Reyes, mentioning, among others, Renren Ritualo, who fired blanks against India.

Ritualo missed all 10 attempts he took, including nine from beyond the arc.

Iran took a little time to warm up, but leaned on a big second quarter to pull away, 36-19. The win comes on the heels of a big victory by the stands of coach Mehran Shahrzad against defending champion Lebanon on opening day.

"You lose the defending champions so they're definitely the team to watch right now," Reyes said before the Philippines' game against doubleone Kazakhstan last night.

The Philippines plays Iran tomorrow night.

Import Andre Pitts again led the Iranians with a triple-double—22 points, 12 rebounds and 10 assists—while United Islamic Sihanouth added 19 points and four boards.

Rajasekaran finished with 24 points and eight boards to lead India, which could hardly get anything going despite bringing things close to the first period, 17-13.

Iran also whipped India off the boards, 61-36, and had one a defense that forced India to miss 61 of 79 shots.

Iran 94
Pitts 22

QUAD 101—Hamdan Al Ajmi 10, Ali 11, Salem 9, Saad 8, Abdi 7, Mohd 7, Yasser 6, Ahmad 2, Salman 2, Lutaibeh 2, Al Sabti 4.

UAE 44—Ishwas 17, Mubarak 10, Mahmoud 8, Nasser 4, Fahim 2, Sarajur 1, Ahmed 1, Mohd 1, Ismael 0, Mubarak 0.

Qatar—Abdulla 26-10-16, 10-6-17, 6-1-18

Second Game

Iran—Pitts 22, Hamrah 10, Mohammadi 10, Sahbazi 10, Nasiri 9, Sharifzadeh 6, Vakili, Khalil 6, Hosseinbeik 4, Mirzaei 4, 3, Mirzaei 2, Jamshidian 1, Kashefi 1.

Philippines—Ritualo 14, Sta Ines 11, Espinosa 6, Dimaculangan 4, Sangco 3, Thomas 2, Dogo 2, 1, Ahmad 2, Custodio 2, Sangco 2, 0, Alvarez 0.

Quarters: 31-13, 26-16, 17-10, 20-10.

ENDEAVOR: Good Will AIAA Thani, Fiba-Asia president, prepares to make the ceremonial toss in the game between the Philippines and India in the Federal Express-16th Fiba Asian Championships Cup on Monday at the Asiatown Coliseum. Among those in photo are Fiba's Dato Yeoh Choo Hock, Hagop Khajirian, Col. Lee Kok Kwan, Sun Miguel CorpPresident-CEO Ramon Ang, and BAP executive VP Cristobal Tan and Manila Hotel president Joey Lina.

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STAGE 5 RESULTS

Solo Stage 5 finish for Feliciano

By Marc Anthony Reyes

ALAMINOS, Pangasinan—Frederick Feliciano used his familiarity with the route to stage a solo breakaway to the final 20 kilometers of Stage 5 yesterday and emerge among the contenders in the Golden Tour Mt@TM.

The national cross-country team mainstay beat the fields finished one minute, 12 seconds save the three-man second group led by Simon Obina of Go 21 and eventually claimed fourth 19th place to stall overall holdfasty through this Islandsun presented by Sandoval.

"I just dred' want to go down as low in the overall standings," said the 27-year-old Feliciano, who covered the 205.5-km drive from Dumpaso City in four hours, 23 minutes and 13 seconds and nursed 1:14 off four-day yellow jersey owner Warren Dimadilla.

The event decisive solo finish by a rider to his cents on the surprise.

A cross country home modulair as the 2005 Southeast Asian Games in Vietnam, Feliciano has been one bets in last year's Philippine and every meter the yellow jersey for three days before losing it for good to Dagupan.

Although complaining of tendonitis on his left knee, Feliciano, from Abuga, Nueva Ecija, said he was able to shrug the Tour of Hinoba'ilanda three and of him last month.

Dimadilla, the CAL-Mt captain, who secured third for the day and 6:33 behind Feliciano, will be enjoying today's rest day with his lead of 2:28 over PLDT skipper Edgar Talampas Jamon.

NST Riders skipper Frederick Feliciano (left) and Alfred Asuncion of Tourfun outside their breakaway in Infanta, Zambales

But there were major movements in the top 10 with Reynaldo Navarro of Cyrene climbing to third place just 2:39 off the pace from ninth. Fernando Aquino of Metro Drug advanced to fourth place is 17 behind Dimadilla and erstwhile third placer Alvin Benosa of Team Mobile slid to fifth, now 3:36 behind.

Tourism captain Aneel Quintos, the 2003 champion, was a week higher from eight just 2:24 behind followed by TMS Sonny Barrachina (5:11), JR Lopez (5:50) and Magic 4 winner Lito Alfiler of Rizal Drug, who bagged into the top 10 from 19th place Sunday.

Despite keeping the lead, Dimadilla complained of heavy guarding from Tanguilig and Benosa. He also lost precious time trying to retrieve his cap of the line Dudley charles which dropped off his cap in the frantic to chase to the final three kilometers.

Luckily for him, the blue tension wrapsaround shadow he used cost P10,000 was picked up by a generous bidder.

As expected master spinner Enrique Domingo, who figured in a split the other day, was never a factor. He was with the second group most of way and later blamed his nomination for refusing to help him ensure a rally.

The 27-year-old Domingo, who noticed trash for the day and more than three minutes behind Feliciano, is next for the stage 20 km time trial.

The race was also marked by minor tragedies with a 13-year-old bystander getting hit by a spinner vehicle vying to secure the riders in Zambales, and one of the riders crash bumping a stony cave as the Tour reached Pangasinan.

Big bikathon street party set Saturday

ALAMINOS—Cyclist Vice SOLTIS greeted her Saturday will host a big street party this Saturday in August's the Hiram Park with the Mount Isla Subic headlining a five-course.

Actor Leah Javier, Tambayan's calendar model for 2005, Jennifer Lee and Miles Hernandez are also the Star Stations scheduled to perform in the streets, where free drinks will be provided for the audience.

Tambay hosted street parties in every stop of the Tour but just and it brought the project up a notch this time.

Meanwhile, some runners Cebu 45 and Courtney Beasley failed to make up ground on overall race leader Melvin Bragais after the 205.5k last fifth leg of the summer spectacle from Dumpaso to here.

Cole 45 stayed in second spot while the Road Warriors ace is third place.

Jewels, Wizards teams to beat in semis today

WITH its talent and championship experience, Mentalita Fisherboys is heavily favored to win the Smart Gilas Cup semifinals.

But the Jewels were given fair warning when they battle the unpredictable Ginebra Great Kremers in Game 1 of their best-of-five series at 2 p.m. today at the 20,000-seat Araneta Coliseum.

"The team is showing intensity," said coach Jun Jun of the Kremers, who drafted the Jewels' first line in this conference. "It will be hard to beat Mentalita, but our energy is there."

And like Sonny Koons, Magnolia has Dondon Hontiveros coming off the playoffs. And the defending champions are banking on the seasoned confidence when they clash against Welcoat Paints in their semi-semifinal duel at 4 p.m.

"The players have worked so hard," said coach Ato Santel, recalling the Wizards' rough start to the eliminations. "Right now, we're always playing like our backs are against the wall."

Mentalita and Welcoat, though, have earned one game standstone after claiming the top two spots in the eliminations. They only need to post two victories, while Magnolia and Ginebra loom have to win thrice to advance to the finals.

The task, though, doesn't appear daunting for the Wizards, who haven't lost a game since Rudy Williams joined their lineup.

Williams, a trade-fl find from Michigan, keyed Magnolia's turnaround by averaging 18.6 points and 9.6 rebounds in five games.

But fellow Fil-Am Anthony Washington is expected to give him a tough time. Washington, one of the top contenders for the Most Valuable Player award, has been leading Welcoat with 21.8 points and 9.6 rebounds. Jasmine M. Payo

ALEX Compton (right) is expected to be at the firing end some of Mentalita's offense against Ginebra Gems today.

SPORTSWATCH

Local standouts gain in Surigao netfest

SURIGAO CITY—Host Isa an overwhelmed Mac Arnel of Bislig A.C. 8-1 in the boys' 14-under class and John Ethan western Mentana Laure A.C. 8-1, 6-1 in 16-under play at the two-day netfest at the San Isidro Sports Complex.

Other title winner Yvonne Cap and regional workshop who kept under way at the Surigao Norte Club here yesterday. Isa no was joined in the court round by Arnel Ayo-Ay of Mission. Southern Leyte who edged Leandro Fernandez of Butuan 8-7, 9-8, 7-5, and by Jose Ryan Mendiola, also of Bislig, 6-0, 6-2 in 14-under round. Princess Mae Fernandez, Surigao City Sanchez Mira-an who advanced to the title tournament organized by CNR, supported by various and sanctioned by the Philippine Tennis Association (PTA) Surigao del Norte Provincial Chapter.

Alcantara, who defeated Jaime Vergara, 6-1, 6-4, and Lawrence Bernal, who overcame Jeremy Tan, 6-1, 6-4, in the boys' 16-under. Mirriam Lou Saul Lauden Fernandez, 8-2, 6-0, and Christine Dizon sealed Bislig's 4-0, 6-0 2.

Ateneo ins, PCHS rule tabinet tilt

ATENEO Lannea has Chinuane the Philippine Cultural High School men's team crushed separate bouts over the Philippine Christian High School (PCHS) Friday in the Philippine Cultural High School men's championship of the Shoopee gym at Balintawak Village, Caloocan City. Ateneo overcame a sluggish start to beat UP building and member Khalil Lhanne Cruz, 8-11, 11-5, 11-6, 11-1, and cruised the women's single title. PCHS bagged the men's team title after defeating Philippine Science High School, Quezon Village, 3-1, in the finals of the tournament organized by ALTBD officers led up by president Charlie Lim, secretary Ali Wade by and VP Wilson Tan as well by its advisers led by Jimmy Tan, Crispin Chua, Wilson Lee, Joey Sy, Stanley Salvador and Hong Hong Chua.

Big Dome rocks with NCA 7-cocker today

FIRST CLASS cockfighting action returns to the Araneta Coliseum today as National Cockers Association (NCA) 1 Cock Derby gets going at 9 a.m. with the Sam Yap Sweepstakes Group as sponsor. SMOKTODay is the 2-cock elimination round, with the championship round kicking off on Thursday. Three more cockfights, including the Derby Finals and the Cocal Invitational Derby on June 14, 15 and 16, are on the NCA calendar before the NCA Cock-of-the-Year is finally known. The top contenders are Patrick Dolores, Gov. Ely Velez and former ombudsman Orlando "Dondog" Calanoga. Rep. Gerry "Boy" Espina, Rudy Mamo, Jun Santiago, Rep. Ronnie Puno and Rep. Atty. Noel Mendoza, JP Magsaysay and Rep. Joey Salceda are the current NCA Derby scribe. Th. Ito Wild Wing Sandoval entry of Pano and retired breeders Jake Jalosjos emerged as champion.

Ormoc derby gets powerhouse backing

TE MANILA: Ormoc's Cock Derby kicks off on June 5 and further bolstering Sports Center with generational industry owners. Manufacturer Mark Gran-Ilos, cardinals and Coordinator and Manufacturer Atty. Bing Rodriguez as sponsors. One of the Philippines' most prestigious cockfighting events, the derby is hosted by Ormoc Cockfile Incorporated and Mayor Eleuterio "Bing" Codilla. The two-day encounter is also supported by congressmen Declaro Codilla of Leyte, Ramon Libanan of Eastern Samar, Angel Espina of Camarines, Sulpicio Yuvieng of Surigao del Sur and Gov. Tony Kho of Masbate. International participants may call Ormoc Cockfile at (053) 255-9160, 255-0609, Sergio Osmeña Drive) at (032) 461-4061, Ormoc Colonial Grand Challenger) at (053) 255-0228, Ormoc Cockfile Incorporated at (032) 511-2455, Mandaluyong (Mandaluyong at (02) 532-1118, Jeffrey Tolosa (Ormoc) at (063) 335-0833, Jaenjen Suarez (Ormoc) at (063) 336-3286.

Lady Archers outclass UST Tigresses

LA SALLE feasted on underestimated rival Santa Rosa, 25-22, 25-17, 25-20, yesterday, for its fifth straight win in the Shakey's V-League at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium.

The player lineup for UST played worse," said La Salle coach Ramil de Jesus of their unexpectedly easy victory over their UAAP rival despite not having practiced.

Michelle Gumabao blasted out 16 points, including 13 kills, while Merella Santos added 12 to lead the defending champs past the Tigresses, who are nearly running the services of any spiker other than Jia Morado in the lineup.

Inaugural conference MVP Mary Jean Balse stepped up for the Tigresses with 11 points, while last season's best attacker Stanzine Nicomedes made only five kills in the match that turned a little over serious.

Without Balse, who is mourning the death of her father, Santo Tomas, at 2-3, needs to shake up a wild retreat Pat Bautista on Thursday to remain in contention for a semifinals berth.

In the first game, Ateneo posted a 26-24, 25-20, 25-13 victory over Lyceum to claim its fourth win in the conference.

Ateneo, easily the tournament's doubleness, held third place with a 4-2 win-loss record.

Rallying from a set down, the Lady Eagles, led by Cecile Tolosura and Bernice Tagaino with 13 points a piece, posted an early 11-point lead in the fourth set to hand Lyceum its sixth loss in as many games.

Meanwhile, La Salle looks to extend its winning run at the expense of Isabina Lyceum also on Thursday at the event backed by Asaki, Mikasa, ISC 13 and Amrah Television. Karla Ivy, and V. Magno

SK sweeps Japan; RP tossers lose

SEOUL—Home-dominated Japan in the first two sets then Hong Kong to complete a 25-16, 25-14, 25-20 victory yesterday in the semifinal round of the fifth Asian Youth Girls Volleyball Championships and assure itself of a spot in the Olympic Championships.

Meanwhile, the Philippines bowed to Thailand, 14-25, 19-25, 17-25, and will play Vietnam for seventh and last today. Thailand faces Australia at the playoffs for third.

Mel Rachel Roselle's 20 points to forward Mel Jean, 19-15, 26-24, 25-18 and 25-17, for fifth place. The Koreans broke away from a 17-7 score in the opener and lost an 18-11 lead en route to taking the first set. The Koreans will meet the winner of the match in semis duel between China and Chinese Taipei. The loser will play Japan for third place and the last World Championships berth.

Samsung Tour gets going at Northwoods

ANN ARBOR, Michigan—The Royal Northbrook Golf and Country Club makes its debut as a venue of the Samsung American Golf Tour when it hosts the opening leg of the series starting today with reigning national grand finals champion Mon Chang tied for leading the championship field.

Action tees off at 8 a.m. with the teenaged Kim, amateur winner at Mt. Mahanoy last February, facing familiar foes including national leading grand prix member Hope Sangmas in the 72-hole meet event of a multi-division tourney.

Sangmas is joined in the event seeking Friday by young Cockfighting teammate Michael Mariano and national caddies champion Joseph Lidoje, Omar Dungca and Jonel Abalos.

There are 27 entries in championship play, 11 of whom are former youngsters who have made the Bahasan course designed by Graham Marsh their home training.

The bulk of the field of about a hundred plays Thursday and Friday as they vie for the Get-up awards in Classes A, B, C and D in the series's debut and Classes A, B, C in the ladies' category.

The Tour's other sponsors are Tokyo Tokyo, EZC, Mazuri, Carpenters Spot, Silver, Philippine Airlines, Symbol, Rudy Project, Cobra Fiber and Sports Hut. Media partners are Wow 99.1, Jam 88.3, 89.9, 99.1, 92, 103.5, Cat and Killer Bee.

The second leg will be hosted by Pueblo de Oro at Carpenters de Oro on June 29-July 2.

Roy Blair Gramps of the organizing Pesbo, annual Sports Management Group said they had to turn down many entries because they want to limit the fields to a maximum of 132 players.

For inquiries on the Samsung American Tour, call 403-8000 or fax 403-8198.

LOW AMATEUR: Jovic Pagaran (right), with daughter LJ, is congratulated by National Golf Association of the Philippines president Benny Cayco for topping the amateur field with a 283 total during the recent 89th Philippine Open at the Mount Malarayat in Lipa City.

KING OF HOPE

In the pocket for 'The Lion'

ALEX "The Lion" Pagulayan added the Hope P1-M All-Filipino Billiards Open 8 championship to his vast title collection, beating defending champion Francisco "Django" Bustamante, 15-14, in a heart-stopping contest before a big crowd at the 3.0-2 of IBC 13 in Quezon City late Sunday night.

Making Bustamante a much tougher opponent in their second meeting in three days, Pagulayan dug deep into the bag of tricks to nail the P500,000 top prize put up by Hope in cooperation with Pepsi Sports and Jewels Television.

It was the second major title in as many months for Pagulayan, who earlier ruled the Canadian Open.

But the Hope All-Filipino title proved to be a lot sweeter for Pagulayan not only because he avenged his loss to Bustamante in their championship meeting but a lot Filipino.

"It feels so good to finally win here in the country," said Pagulayan, the 26-year old Filipino-Canadian from Toronto. "I really feel like half a million peso richer."

Pagulayan clinched the win a few moments after Bustamante gambled on hitting the blue ball on a rebound shot instead of scratch.

When Bustamante missed, Pagulayan knew the title was his for the taking.

Bustamante, who dropped a 3-1 decision to Pagulayan in the quarterfinal round Friday settled for the runners-up purse of P200,000.

Former World Pool champion Efren "Bata" Reyes and Dion Glen Nelbud, Asian Games gold medalist Lee Ilac Cuenca, the losing semifinalists, won P50,000 apiece.

Reyes fell to Bustamante, while Cuenca bowed to Pagulayan in the semifinals.

Aside from beating Bustamante and Cuenca, Pagulayan also booted qualifier Cesbi Dado, 9-3.

Before eliminating Reyes, Bustamante won over Antonio Lining, 9-1, Jeffrey de Luna, 9-5, and Antonio Gabica, 9-4, in the eliminations.

ALEX Pagulayan (right) receives his check from tiffanie "goddess" Arizaca "Poyin" Poyat.

Viloria's KO victim slips into a coma

AN AMERICAN fighter of Filipino lineage knocked out his foe, who later went into coma following their bout last Sunday undercard at the Auditorio Cesar Chavez (now Robinson Pelton) east of the Staples Center in Los Angeles.

Brian Ulloda, who fought in the 2000 Olympics and is now handled by Manny Pacquiao's trainer, Freddie Roach, went at the 52th second mark of the sixth round when the referee stopped his bout with Ruben Guevara of Mexico.

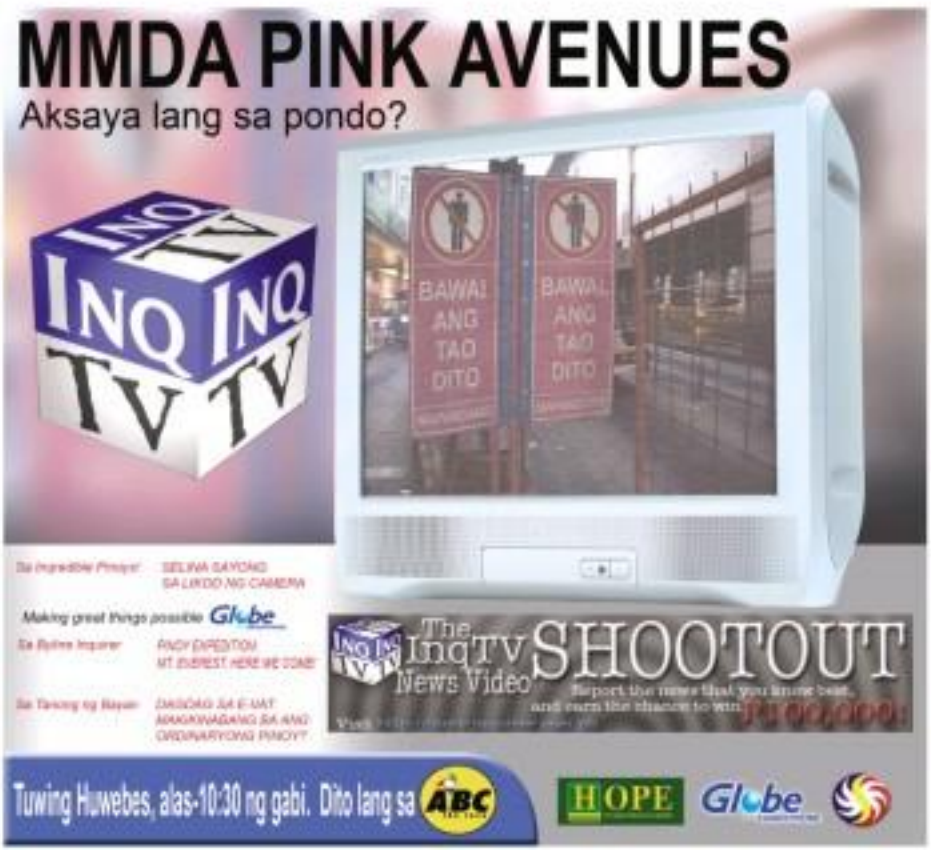
The undefeated Guevara suddenly collapsed moments after the fight was halted and was rushed to the nearby California Hospital Medical Center.

The Ginebra native, Mexico, fighter then underwent surgery to relieve pressure from bleeding on his brain.

He was in a medically induced coma for the next 72 hours to give the swelling time to reduce.

The undefeated Ulloa (17-0, 11 KOs) was using the Guevara bout as a tune-up fight for his July 29 challenge to World Boxing Council light flyweight champion Ivan Calderon.

Ulloa, a resident of Chula Vista, California, is a graduate of the University of San Diego.



TUESDAY, MAY 31, 2005
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
B1
BUSINESS

T-bill rates continue downtrend

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British gov't sees RP economy growing
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91-day rate eases to 5.767%

By Michelle V. Remo

TREASURY bill rates continued to decline across all maturities yesterday as officials said the improved outlook by Fitch Ratings on the Philippines boosted market confidence in the country's fiscal standing.

"With that (improved market confidence) and the high level of liquidity in the market, there is really no way to go for interest rates but down," Michael Tetangco Deputy Governor said in a briefing after yesterday's auction.

The benchmark 91-day treasury bill rate, which banks use in pricing their loans, slid further to 5.767 percent after falling below the 6-percent mark last week to 5.92 percent.

The three-month debt paper was highly oversubscribed as tenders totalled P7.53 billion compared with the government's debt offering of only P2 billion for each maturity.

The rate for the 182-day bills fell by 14.9 basis points to 6.017 percent. Bids for the six-month government security were also high at P7.39 billion. The 364-day treasury bills fetched a rate of 6.934 percent, or 5.1 basis points lower than the previous week's. (One percentage point is equivalent to 100 basis points.)

Last week, credit-rating firm Fitch Ratings announced that it adjusted its outlook on the Philippines' long-term foreign and local currency ratings from "negative" to "stable." The ratings agency cited the developments on the country's fiscal front, such as the passage of the value-added tax bill, which is the Arroyo administration's key measure to help trim the government's looming budget deficit.

A stable outlook means the country can possibly get a credit-rating upgrade within the short term.

The VAT bill, which lifted the exemption of several products and services, is estimated to yield P166.75 billion in additional revenues in the remaining part of the year and as much as P420 billion annually starting next year. The bill also raised the corporate income tax rate from 32 to 35 percent, and gave President Macapagal-Arroyo a standby authority to impose additional taxes on petroleum products.

Inflation seen at 8.1-8.6%

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas yesterday said the country's annual inflation rate likely averaged between 8.1 and 8.6 percent in May, up for from the 6.5 percent in April.

For the full year, the inter-agency Development Budget Coordination Committee expects inflation rate to average at 7.6 percent, even higher than the BSP's latest internal forecast of 6.8-7 percent.

Government economic managers have long contended that this year's inflation, which measures the rate of increase in the prices of basic goods and services, would overshoot the official ranges of 5-6 percent.

The BSP did not expect a significant uptick in consumer prices for the month of May compared to the previous month.

"Lower oil prices in May, likely tempered overall price increases and kept inflation close to the April number," said BSP Officer-in-Charge Alfredo Tetangco Jr.

The BSP-reported price movements high in the foreseeable future, but its own inflation forecasts for the full year do not include other factors like the transport fare adjustment, the impact of a 2-percentage increase in the value-added tax, and another increase in the

Full Story p. A1

Currencies

Stock Market

Stocks rise on bargain-hunting

Canon
Delighting You Always
Achieve More With PIXMA All-In-One Printers
PIXMA MP150
FREE
PIXMA

Sun earmarks $200M for 2006 expansion

By Clarissa S. Ocampo

SUN (SUBSCRIBED-OWNED) Digital Telecommunications Philippines Inc. is earmarking another $200 million for the expansion of San Cellular's network infrastructure next year.

This will enable the phone company to accommodate up to 10 million subscribers by the end of 2006, a company official said.

Digitel is currently implementing a $200-million expansion project that will bring to 2,500 its total cell sites this year.

The company aims to increase its subscriber base this year to 7 million from the current level of 5.7 million.

With the heavy investments in its infrastructure, the company is not expecting to post profit until 2006.

"We are investing $200 million this year and another $200 million next year for our wireless business. We want to build a strong network for our text and sell unlimited plan under 24/7," said James Go, vice chair of Digitel.

He said this year's expansion would allow the network to service about 6 million customers.

Go told shareholders during Digitel's annual general meeting yesterday that the company would also use a combination of installed funds and borrowings to finance the expansion program in 2006.

Charles Lim, head of Digitel's mobile services said Tom Cellular would be "hands positive" by the middle of next year in terms of exchange between inbound, outbound, depreciation and amortization or ebitda.

"The cellular company should start posting profits by 2006," said Lim.

Digitel posted a net loss of P451 million in the first quarter.

Go denied that Digitel was losing money because of the 24/7 plan.

"On the contrary our finances have been improving since we launched our popular and cost effective plan."

The Gokongwei wireless brand will commence with its 24/7 unlimited text and call deal within the network, he said.

"In an 24/7 a call the low value proposition and we want to give more people the opportunity to come in, especially as we expand the network coverage to about 5 million by July," said Lim.

Digitel senior vice president William Panlilio said San Cellular would come up with new promos that would give subscribers better value.

Before 24/7 was launched in October, San Cellular had only 700,000 customers. Its subscriber base has more than doubled since then.

"We are overcoming different variations. We want to address all segments of the market," said Panlilio.

When the going gets top

[illegible] had news and good news. And I also happy to have the "winning combination" in yesterday's meeting.

I am not kidding. I actually received a BBM, meaning, a cellular phone "text" message, which contained nothing but two numbers.

Every minimum passenger would have supposed that the numbers were the betting three rambo somewhere, like, I did not believe any of it.

But how could I? I know fully well that the P50 under this coin-collection system of Universal, but remember when nobody ever did under all the previous administration in the history of the country and they already expect our betting all sure three rambo.

(Whoever you are, stop sending me those messages. I already stopped betting, clean. Until after the Senate hearings, okay?)

* * *

THE BAR now is that the new airport terminal at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, the Nina X, will not start operations until March, as promised.

I mean, in one of our columns, till the months ago, Gemma said that the new terminal would open next month. This was what she promised us.

No, definitely, she did not promise us that the airport would NOT open. Well, it has been in a state of NON-opening for a long time now.

And in a casual encounter, Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza told that the Japanese contractor for the terminal, a group called Takenaka, was growing as a hard time.

Apparently, Takenaka would not plan full with this new administration. For the longest time, it did not want to give to this space —the technical delay.

And the Manila International Airport Authority needed the design to finish the airport, because a lot still has to be done, considering this P100 million wall it uses it.

Anyway, Pantino said that, definitely, the new terminal will be opened but, unfortunately it is not going to be up to month, as promised.

Oh well, what's another broken promise?

* * *

BUT I also have wonderful news for those of you who are disappointed about the new airport terminal.

And that is, nobody is building a first-class hotel near the new terminal. Yes, it is located at the outer zone, somewhere near the Villamor Air Base.

Such is a "text" message I want to receive—not posting, mind you—from the PNP bosses when, I am not even in a position to publish the winning numbers, okay?

Anyway, some of you may be disappointed to know that, not everything is going to be up to our expectations. The truth is, some aspects of the economy are going great.

Partly, thanks to the liberalization operations on OFWs passes, for instance, which is done via "text," the telecom sector is posting record earnings.

There is also the IT sector, where you have the "call centers," and the software/games industries, one, no, not that, I mean, the fledgling software programming business. The thing called Ana Maglal, a Filipino company is also now the biggest—again, THE biggest—food and beverage company in the whole of Southeast Asia.

Saul Iavarone sa gala, sad es, sam...believe it or not...is pushing up. Really, there is still a lot of room to be made on the stock. That's why somebody is building that airport hotel.

* * *

THAT somebody is named Andrew Tan, founder of the Megaworld group, the most prolific developer of condos in the country today, delivering some 8,000 units every year, for the past several years.

And in one hour and find a lot glitzier and high-end condos for those days.

But still, that economy has not spilled over to OFWs, who are sending home roughly $12.5 billion every year, which means more than P600 billion in remittances.

Take it from Andrew Tan. Years ago, actually, he already saw the buying power of those OFWs, particularly the high-income groups such as the nurses and the engineers, and even the office-level seamen.

Megaworld was ahead of every trade in getting elevated straight to those OFWs. In market for housing and condos. The company did it starting in 1998, or as soon as the domestic real estate market felt the aftershocks from the money/financial crisis of 1997.

* * *

THIS time, hopefully, the recovery in real estate sector will have more of the direct during the boom of the 1990s. Well, maybe not to those days, you'd call it that "unsustainability."

I think the banks have a lot more to do with that inflation word than any sector. In real estate financing, the banks are hoarding up the right people.

* * *

Today, unlike during the boom in the 1990s, banks are aggressive in lending to the real estate of outside sectors, such as requiring couples to be so-called "to-lose loans."

Still, nobody seems to stay with the "to-loan," right, and as far as long as there are "to-loan" in this world, there will be a need for new housing units.

The banks are lending to such people. the buyers. This was not the case in the 1990s. At that time, the banks were stupid enough to lend to the developers.

I can still remember fondly the stupid banks that lent something like P1 billion to a guy who put the money in land. Well, idle loan, of course! The

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Lifetime seeks reversal of SEC revocation order

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

LIFETIME Plans Inc., a subsidiary of Pacific Plans Inc. (PPI), asked the Securities and Exchange Commission to reverse a decision disbanding the company.

In a petition filed with the SEC on Friday, Lifetime Plans said the SEC had committed "grave abuse of discretion and a reversible error" when it issued an order revoking Lifetime's certificate of incorporation.

SEC Commission Secretary Lenard Lichtenstein, confirming the receipt of the petition, said the commission en banc has yet to meet and discuss Lifetime's petition.

Lifetime claimed the order was issued in a manner "grossly abhorrent to its well-established principle of due process." It claimed the order was issued without the benefit of a required notice and hearings as provided for by the SEC's own rules and guidelines.

Lifetime also claimed that the order had failed to sufficiently state and discuss the reasons for the revocation of the certificate of incorporation.

The petition also said that according it did not sufficiently comply with the SEC's requirements, it should not be used as a basis to revoke the company's incorporation certificate.

Lifetime claimed the SEC did not ask the company to show cause why its certificate of incorporation should not be revoked. "Neither was a hearing set to give Lifetime an opportunity to be heard," it added.

"It is respectfully submitted that the issuance of a resolution...was an grave and he resulting in canceling the corporate existence of Lifetime or any corporation for that matter cannot be done clandestinely by way of a mere executive session," Lifetime said.

Lifetime also said the SEC's claim that its documents were insufficient had no basis and was unfounded.

Insular Life income up 28%

INSULAR Life has reported a record consolidated net income in 2004 of P1.06 billion, up by 28 percent from the previous year's P828 million.

The increase was due largely to a sustained high premium production and a 26-percent rise in interest income from government bonds, money market placements, loans, dividends from equity investments and trading gains, totaling P2.8 billion.

Also contributing to the increase in net income were significant savings brought about by the streamlining of operations and cost-efficiency initiatives.

Consolidated revenues reached P10.4 billion, slightly higher than year-ago level. Premium income reached P5.3 billion. Consolidated assets amounted to P47.4 billion, up 15 percent from the previous year's figure. Shareholders' equity also increased by 18 percent to P6.0 billion. Total benefits paid to life and non-life policyholders amounted to P4.9 billion. Dividends paid to individual life insurance policyholders amounted to P845 million.

In his report to policyholders, Insular Life chair and CEO Vicente G. Ayllon said the company banked on a proven mix of operational efficiency, product innovation, responsive delivery of services, and sound investment strategy to strengthen its stability and financial performance.

Prices to remain stable–Santos

By Abigail L. Ho

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry has assured the public that commodity prices will remain stable despite the enactment into law of the expanded value-added tax measures.

In a briefing yesterday, Trade Secretary Jose Santos said prices of basic commodities would only go up if President Macapagal-Arroyo would decide to use her standby power to raise the VAT rate from 10 percent to 12 percent.

Under the expanded VAT law, however, the President can use her standby power only if the VAT collection exceeds 2.8 percent of the previous year's gross domestic product or if the national government deficit goes beyond 2.5 percent of GDP.

Santos also said most of the commodities covered by the expanded VAT law were already being slapped a 10-percent VAT rate.

Price increases, he said, would most likely occur "when other components come into the picture, which will already be covered by the VAT."

The actual impact of the VAT law on commodity prices would depend on certain production components, such as fuel and labor, he said.

The new law withdrew the VAT exemptions of petroleum products. This means that prices of commodities with fuel accounting for a big chunk of the production cost would likely go up.

For cement, for example, Santos said the VAT impact would be more pronounced because energy expenses accounted for about 33-36 percent of production cost.

For milk, on the other hand, he said the impact would not be as much since fuel expenses accounted for only 2 percent of the production costs.

The Department of Agriculture also said prices of pork, chicken, vegetables, fish, rice and corn would be hardly affected by the new VAT law.

While giving assurance of price stability, Santos said the DTI, DA and Department of Energy were closely coordinating with each other to ensure that there would be no abuse of the new VAT law and that commodity supply would be enough.

Gov't to expand power rate discount coverage

By Michelle V. Rosca

THE GOVERNMENT is looking at expanding the coverage of the "lifeline rates" on electricity to include more households in a bid to cushion the impact of rising prices and the implementation of the expanded value-added tax on consumers.

A government official said the Department of Energy was considering raising the electricity consumption threshold eligible for rate discounts to 350 kilowatt-hours from 100 kWh.

Under the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira), those consuming 71 to 100 kWh of electricity are entitled to a 25-percent discount, those consuming 51 to 70 kWh enjoy a 50-percent discount, while those consuming 50 kWh or less get a 50-percent discount.

The source said that aside from possibly raising the threshold for the lifeline rates, the DOE is also looking at the reduction of the tariff on fuel from 5 percent to 3 percent.

President Macapagal-Arroyo recently signed into law the expanded value-added tax measure, which imposed VAT on products and services that were previously exempted from the tax, including electricity and oil, and services rendered by lawyers and doctors.

The law also raised the corporate income tax rate from 32 to 35 percent, and granted the President a standby authority to raise the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent next year.

The Department of Finance said the law on the expanded VAT was the Arroyo administration's main revenue-raising measure to comply with the government's fiscal projections. The DOF also noted that the expanded VAT would raise P28.75 billion in the remaining part of the year, and as much as P105 billion annually starting next year.

BCDA plans to tap new John Hay operator

THE BASES Conversion and Development Authority said it was not planning to run Camp John Hay on its own.

Instead, the BCDA said in a statement that it would look for a new developer to operate the facility should it decide to take over the former military base.

The statement was made to address the concerns aired by Baguio City Representative Mauricio Domogan that the facility "would be better managed by the private sector."

"We support Congressman Domogan's view that the government should not be involved in property development and management. This is why a new private operator will be selected to run Camp John Hay," the BCDA said.

BCDA subsidiary John Hay Management Corp. spokesperson Lynn Pagaoa-Cable said "it appears inevitable that a new private operator may have to come in since these terms as far as selection as right to the huge debt problems facing the current private operator."

"A number of potential operators with world-class capabilities and experience in operating similar tourism facilities have already expressed interest in handling the operations of Camp John Hay," Pagaoa-Cable said.

Several local and foreign investors have signified their serious interest in operating John Hay.

The PR firm's group-backed Camp John Hay Development Corp. (CJHDevco) bagged the lease agreement to operate the facility but has incurred some P2.3 billion in arrears, of which P1.2 billion is due and demandable.

Manila Jockey Club now rated stable

I COULD not settle yesterday because first of all I was watching the thrilling 9-ball pool match between Pagulayan and Buenaventura. It was a race to 13 and the score was 14 all. The tension was unbearable and my blood pressure went through the roof. Then I switched over to watch the Miss America competition and put my bets, I found myself watching the swimsuit competition. After 20 minutes, I was suffering from hypertension, asthma and irritation. My doctor has given me an ultimatum... Point now on, I can only watch Discovery Channel and Cartoon Network. I thought the competition was limited to single women. How dull this...!!!! get it?

The PDA is looking into complaints that 10-40A cut costs 100 drivers apparently the drug raiders the blood away from the brain and nearby organs, including the ear, and transfers it to where it is needed most. One of the friends took it. He assured me optimistic he ended with a tiny spec.

I missed the first 3 episodes of Star Wars so I doubt that I will understand Revenge of the Sith.

President Bush is not the most intelligent President that the United States has ever had but last week, he surpassed himself. Confederate Kim told him that America would not depend forever on imported oil. American reacted with outrage. Immediately, the President asked Congress for $100 billion to send 200,000 troops to correct the use.

I like to read the English newspapers from time to time. Even non native subjects from newspapers.

Commenting on a complaint from Mr. Isidro Pudoy about a large gas bill, a spokesperson for the Gas Company said, "We agree it was rather high for the time of year. It is possible that you have been charged for the large amount of gas used up during the explosion that destroyed your home."

Irish police are being handicapped in a search for a stolen car because their cannot issue a description. It is a Special Branch vehicle and they don't want the public to know what it looks like.

At the height of a gale, the hurricanoose

Ron Nadhan

realized a consignment on the spot and asked him to estimate the wind speed. He replied that he was sorry but did not have a gauge. However, if it was any help, the wind had just blown his Land Rover off the cliff.

* * *

What can I say about the stock market other than it remains container from its lows upward. Net turnover, which excludes cross sales, is a miserable P600,000. Converted into dollars, turnover stood at most its lowest since The Phantom, when American Idol was on, Filipinos stole and the computer ticker tape moved in slow motion, just like Channel 5 on Sunday.

The market has an little reassurance that it is somehow trying to crash. Today only two stocks traded over P10 million, Ellcard BPI. The rise in the CPI/BSI was largely due to a P36 gain in TEL. I think the market will continue to creep up in low turnover while the former threatens the issue of "tapering" and the Supreme Court the constitutional validity of the PRTMB.

In the meantime, PEOA has upgraded our view from negative to stable but our hands remain Uncola letter pink so we still have a long way to go. The President estimates that the bill will produce P75 billion but economists say that the figure is only P30 billion. Ross Stevens, an American investment house, estimates that it will produce only P20 billion, better than nothing but quite inadequate. Anyway, the market has responded sluggishly and most investors are sitting on the sidelines.

PIL FINANCE held its annual general meeting last Friday but I was unable to attend as I am married to the daily newsletter. President ESCMFB announced that since 2000, the number of semi-bad movement from 700 to 2000, a compound growth rate of 140 percent. Profits for the first quarter had more than tripled from a year ago, from P342 million to P10.4 million. Based on what is already booked this year, he forecast a profit of around P450 million, up from PP115 million last year.

This is well before my expectation of P5200 million but I was able to clarify the situation with another director. The profit boost does not take into account further orders confidently expected in the next 7 months nor does it include expansion of existing orders. The company is now diversifying its activities so as to capitalize on its use of computers, even at nights. They are looking at acquisitions in the medical and transcription outsourcing businesses and are also tapping opportunities in China, India, Malaysia, Singapore and Europe where they can take advantage of the varying time differences. This adds extra profit because the call centers can be used during the day and the only expense is the agent's salary.

I am sticking to my forecast and will update readers as each quarter's profit is announced. There should increase incrementally as the number of seats increase. By the end of May, there will be a rights issue of 1 for 2 at only P1, almost a stock dividend, and stockholders must take it up, otherwise they will lose out. The purpose of the rights issue is not to raise money but to improve liquidity which leaves much to be desired. I have not made any allowance for the use of the P300 million but will be raised.

The call center industry is expected to grow by 30 percent for the next five years and according to my calculations, this figure is an increase of 271 percent. The call center industry is still in the early throes of expansion and just like the television sector was three years ago where I recommended TEL at P106, PH remains my favorite stock and over the next year, I expect the price to appreciate by 50 percent, allowing for the adjustment to the rights issue.

The company is also a major player in PHATS, which sounds like a cure for rheumatism. My own suggestion, GILL GOLS INC., was flatly rejected. Loan's imagination.

Central Luzon is paying COLA P50 a day. WHE, COLA and PHATS also pay COLA. mehfrankdl@hotmail.com

Disclosures

ELECTEC director, of **Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.** were Ismino M. Ibrahim, Roger Lee S. Carlos, Christopher D. Mabilin, Victor M. Endaya, Lim Chee Seong, Manuel P. Lozano, Roberto S. Almadro, Raul M. Leopando and George T. Sycip.

* * *

ELECTEC directors of **Semirara Mining Corp.** were Manuel M. Concepcion, Isidro R. Consunji, Victor A. Consunji, Cesar A. Buenaventura, Jorge A. Consunji, Herbert M. Consunji, George San Pedro, Arthur M. Aguilar and Rafael M. Lotilla, where C. Macalinsang and Federico C. Puno are elected as independent directors.

* * *

BANCO de Oro Universal Bank disclosed that Jose T. Sio is the new appointed advisor to the board of directors. Election officers were Director F. Tarun yumsaijee, Pedro M. Roman and Corporate Secretary Isaia C. Paris as corporate secretary and Luis J. Tejam Jr. as assistant corporate secretary.

* * *

ELECTEC directors of **Basic Consolidated Inc.** were Oscar C. de Veneccia, Benjie M. Lucero, Oscar L. de Veneccia Jr., Hanson L. Mapa, Arsenio Dizon, Isidro D. Sze, Prudencio C. Guevara Jr., Porfino Antonio Mijares, Roberto S. Almazan, Dominic J. Vargas and Ponciano Guevara.

* * *

PETRONAS ROME, Consortium Terminal Services Inc. disclosed that a notice published in the May 28 issue of The Manila Times (internet edition) is limited on an invitation to the services of an international Finance Corp. arbitrat. The company did not receive an official announcement that the port project had been won since. *Compiled by Zeller R. Zarmsolo, PDI Research*

T-bill rates continue . . .

Previous page B3

thirsty to raise the 182 rate from 10 to 12 per

cent next week.

Government said that with the positive develop-

ments calmed to the country's fiscal standing, together with the improved outlook by Fitch Ratings, it was necessary to update foreign investors who might want to place their money in government securitybonds.

The national treasurer said the government's economic managers would go on a road roadshow in Europe and the United States in June to discuss fiscal developments in the Philippines among foreign investors.

According to the government's borrowing program, the Philippines will aim to raise $600 million through bond e-mission to complete its $4-billion foreign borrowing requirement for this year.

The government is targeting to complete its foreign borrowing program in the third quarter. Earlier, the government raised $2.25 billion through two separate bond floatations.

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
Provincial Government of Isabela

The Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) of the Provincial of Isabela invites interested bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following requirements and supplies:

Date and Time & Place of Bidding	Item Description	Approved Budget
Jun 1, 2005, 10:00 AM Provincial Capitol, Ilagan, Isabela	Drugs and Medicines/Financial Supplies	172 Million
	Veterinary, Medical, Office, Medical and Firefighting Supplies, IT/Med Equipment	P 1 Million
	Hospital Equipment and Medical Instruments	P 4 Million

Contract Duration: Upon the receipt by the Bids Committee
Delivery Period: Based on the Calendar days

NOTE: All prevailing Government rules and regulations shall be observed in the opening of the Contract. Bids Conference Hall, Capitol Building, Ilagan, Isabela

Complete terms of Application form for Eligibility and Bid Documents may be obtained from the BAC Secretariat's Office, Capitol Building, Ilagan, Isabela upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of P1,000.00 "FOLDING PROCESS of Pre-Qualification, Bidding and Evaluation of Contracts for the Procurement of Goods and Infrastructure Projects" under R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

The Provincial of Isabela reserves the right to reject any or all bids or any portion thereof or to accept such portion as may be deemed best and advantageous to the government, without thereby incurring any of the following: (a) liability or damages to the affected bidder or bidders; (b) the necessity of giving reasons for the rejection of the bids and (c) obligation to inform the affected bidder/s of the grounds for the rejection of his bid/s action.

(Sgd.) IRA THERESA A. FLORES
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee

GOOD PROSPECTS

British government sees RP economy growing

By Cecile P. Gorospe
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—The British government is confident that the Philippine economy will grow over the next two to three years.

Peter Beckingham, British Ambassador to the Philippines, said on Sunday that Britain has overseen an inflow of Philippines among the eight countries where it launched a new program for better economic governance.

"We are looking at helping improve the way government corporations are run and at tackling corruption in them," he said.

The passage of the Expanded Value Added Tax, he added, will also hopefully further strengthen the Philippine economy.

Beckingham also noted that President Macapagal-Arroyo appointed some very strong economic leaders.

He said Trade and Industry Secretary Jose Antonio recently spoke to leaders of about 40 British companies in Manila, and gave a very impressive presentation of how the Philippine economy was progressing.

Britain is the biggest European investor in the country, said Beckingham, who was in Negros Occidental for the launching of the national biofuel program in San Carlos City Monday.

Renewable, a British firm, is one of the investors in a P1.5-billion ethanol and power plant to be built in San Carlos City.

Beckingham said there were a lot of British firms doing business in the Philippines that were not just taking money out of the country but were generating jobs in the country.

The Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corp. is going to recruit 4,000 jobs in the Philippines through the development of call centers, he said.

"The bank is expanding in the Philippines in a very big way," he added.

The Financial Times in England also has a back office operation in Manila.

The newspaper has sent journalists in the country but employs 70 people in Manila to do all their accounting, said Beckingham.

"Our role in the embassy is to try to get more British investments in the Philippines," he said, adding that the two countries enjoyed a "very good" political relationship.

The ambassador said there were still a lot of job opportunities for Filipino nurses in Britain, as Filipino nurses were very popular in Britain.

There were more Filipino nurses in Britain than from neighboring Ireland and Australia, he added.

Beckingham said there were 350,000 Filipinos in Britain who were making a real contribution to its economy, not just in nursing.

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Tourism, infra seen key to Bicol growth

BAGUIO, Mines—President Macapagal-Arroyo said here last week that both the promotion of tourism and investing in infrastructure projects were the keys to boosting the economy of the Bicol region.

"There's no doubt that Bicol's majestic Mayon Volcano continues to draw tourists from around the world, but at this point in time, there should be more—other than this—to help Bicol's tourism," the President said in her visit to the Misibis Residencial Beach Resort, a world-class residential resort and beachfront spa in Cagraray Island in the town.

"That's why I would say now that I'm encouraging them to savor other attractions in the region like surfing along the Pacific side of Bicol, such as in Catanduanes, Camarines Sur and the province of Camarines Norte, including [whale shark] sightings in Donsol, Sorsogon, and even marine sightings in Tinaco in Albay," President Arroyo added.

She said it was one of her agencies under Bicol one of the popular tourism destinations in the country after Boracay in Aklan, for the region has potentials to boost economic tourism more.

For purposes of infrastructure and investment, President Arroyo said she had roughly divided the country into four parts—north Luzon including the United Philippines, together with the Visayas and some parts of Southern Mindanao—primarily for tourists.

The President added that a potential investment airport in Barangay Abiba, Sorsogon, effort was also one of her priorities with Singapore, which will undergo improvements as it has been allocated P1.5 million for lighting from the Air Transportation Office in 2005 and almost P7 million for terminal building and parking area rehabilitation from the Department of Public Works and Highways in 2006. Gil Francis G. Arevalo, PIA Southern Luzon Bureau

4 firms vie for geothermal plant contract

SILIMAN, Negros Oriental—Four foreign companies will vie for the P1.6-billion power optimization project in this town that would process additional energy for the Mount Apo.

The project's proponents have initially targeted to generate 20 megawatts to be added to the existing 108 MW generated by Philippine Electric Corporation (Philec), a subsidiary of the Philippine National Oil Company-Environmental Development Corp. (PNOC-EDC) earlier said.

But PNOC-EDC president Fred Aquino told reporters here recently that the company is to approach state for the project developers to generate the more electricity from the available geothermal steam.

Aquino did not identify the construction firms interested in undertaking the project but described them as Japanese, French and three Iran companies.

He said the project would be funded from a P1.6 billion loan that the PNOC-EDC obtained last year from the Development Bank of the Philippines.

The contractor is to locate the project, the power was supposed to be undertaken only by a Filipino-owned company but PNOC-EDC sought assurances there no Filipino owned company could do the job.

Dindo Cayang, technical manager of PNOC-EDC's Southern Negros Geothermal Production Field, added that among the few that have the capability to undertake turbines were Japanese, American, French and Italian companies.

Cayang said the project developer would be responsible for the engineering, procurement and construction of the new power plant, including the manufacturing of turbines and generators.

Aquino said the four foreign construction firms would undergo the newly required "eligibility" assessment, which will include one from the Bureau of Internal Revenue. Romy S. Arboleda, PIA Visayas Bureau

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LIFESTYLE

Editor Cheiu Bonot-Formoso

Tanned and fit in Boracay

WELLNESS haven in tropical paradise

Some visitors of the famed island not only enjoyed sand and sea but also a good workout

By Shirley Oh
Contributor

GOOD food, good life." Add to that "good times," what people, who participated in the recent wellness seminar organized by Manila Fitness Central in Boracay, had.

Nearly forty of all ages, shapes and sizes enjoyed four days of fitness with the help of the wellness maniac Manila Fitness Central set up on the Boracay beach. There were sixth for free fitness consultations, free fees to refreshing sessions, free massages and free tastes of Manila Fitness Central, with an array of toppings to choose from.

Main draw

The biggest attraction, however, was the

ZEN moment

REMA Chavez in yoga pose

WINNERS. The Nestea Beach Volley 2005 champs—CSB's Arnold Laniog, SWU's Florian Gutierrez and Mollica Nasad, and CSB's Jaxley Paerosa

NBV president Roger Bantilan, Manila Beach Volley tournament director Dior Concepcion, Manila AVP and Nestea brand manager Tina Santoro, Manila AVP tie promos and events Raymond Villaflor and Manila AVP tie-in/brand specialist for Nestea Bun Estavillo

HOTSHOTS. Manila executives Monica Cuenco, Mark Reyes, Joel Andres, food services brand manager for beverages Jamie Lim and Krissy Tavares

Last volley of summer

SOMACAT hosted this year's most exciting summer event, the Nestea Beach Volley 2005

MEN'S division runner-up players Joseph Algono and Jeremy Suing of USJ-R

SPORTS, fun beach volleyball athletes dazzled us during the successful three-day run of a-kind 9th Nestea Beach Volley 2005 in Boracay, which was always looked forward to, pulangyan.

Hot athletes stood apart from the others because of their amazing athleticism and talent.

The first day of the games was the much awaited Nestea match, with hotshots from the movies and modeling world showing how good or bad they were off the screen and ramp, pulangyan. Models Bread Justice, Nicoleta Bell and Kathleen Paredes joined actors Nancy Castiglione, Epi Quizon and Izzy Jade beauty queen Jade Lewis Tenio A.

Team E consisted of models Rissa Samson, Valerie de los Santos, Bobbie Mirasangel, Ormara Cachero, Bongs Manalo, and television personality Geoff Rodriguez.

MOI and Smart/Addict model Bongs Manalo

BAMBOO Manalac got Boris rocking

DID Abrame of Makati's

Zapped

Well, to make a long story short, Team E was zapped by Team A. Too bad, huh!

The biggest surprise were the hottest volleyball champs from universities and schools around the country, including Manila, who all took part in this hot beach series, pulangyan.

The highest award, Most Valuable Player, was presented to spiker Florian Gutierrez of Cebu's Southwestern University (SWU) and Jaxley Paerosa of the men's division champion, De la Salle University-College of St. Benilde (DLSU-CSB) in Manila.

Thunderous applause, whistles and yells were received by the biggest winners. Florian and Morales/Gutierrez, who also drew FMVs that managed to secure an unprecedented third consecutive women's title. Liezl Wenceslao and Melba Quer of University of Mindanao-Tagum finished second, the highest finish ever for a Mindanao team, while Kimberli Mangubat and Juleri Rae Wambat of University of San Jose-Recoletos, which

THE HOTTLE Fitness Corner wellness seminar aimed to help people have a fit and healthy body through proper diet and physical activity.

Tanned and fit in Boracay

[illegible]

[illegible] area where two candle classes were held from morning till afternoon. Yoga, body sculpt, belly dancing and body balance classes were led by energetic Health Fitness instructors who continuously encouraged participants to give a little more energy and burn a little more fat.

Different crowds, from bikini- and trunks-clad set to the more covered-up group of partners, joined in the fun of sweating out under the sun with a beautiful beach for background. Rose Fit secretary Norma Chavez joined in the exercising and did a belly dancing routine too.

Copy of Health Plus mineral water was readily available for everyone and, in between classes, participants relished the laid-back island life as they lounged in the free massages offered by Health Fitness.

One of many

The Boracay wellness seminar was just one of many activities Health Plus has lined up for its wellness campaign, "Let's Talk Wellness with Health." In keeping with the campaign slogan, "Good Food, Good Life," Health Plus aims to help people become more health-conscious not only by introducing nutritious food products but also by encouraging consumers to adopt healthy lifestyles.

The Health Fitness Corner wellness seminar's major thrust was to help people feel good about themselves by having a fit and healthy body through healthy eating and physical activity. The well-attended workout session proved to be a welcome alternative to swimming and dining, that seems to be the main activities of Boracay goers. People who don't get the chance to exercise often enjoyed participating in the classes while regular gym goers were happy for the opportunity to do their fitness regimen even while on vacation.

After the success of the first wellness seminar, Health Plus is looking forward to making this activity a yearly summer event.

FITNESS Instructors in good form

Sweat it out

WELL AND GOOD

Thea Ivarra

THEY say losers sweat, sore people and women "glow." Whichever way you look at it, it has been an incredibly hot and sweaty season. The rainy months are almost upon us but, because we live in a hot and country perspiration still always be part and parcel of our lives.

Why we sweat

The body is like an engine that never stops running. Unlike car engines, it produces heat. The more the muscles maintain (like during exercise), the more heat is produced.

Your body has to be efficient at keeping you cool or you would rapidly overheat and collapse in 15-20 minutes. The reason this doesn't happen is because the body has several ways of cooling down.

The first is radiation. Heat radiates out of the skin and is absorbed by the environment if the surroundings are cooler than our body.

The second is conduction. This is the loss of heat through direct contact. For example, if you go swimming in a cold mountain lake, the water directly absorbs the heat of your body. The opposite is also true. If you are next to a hot spring, your body will absorb the heat.

The third is convection. Moving air helps cool us down. Think how refreshing your bed when the wind blows, when you fan yourself or when you are under an electric fan.

The last is evaporation. When heat our blood absorbs the heat and moves to the surface of the skin via the smallest blood vessels (capillaries) and creates a cooling effect.

In hot weather, sweating is the primary method of staying cool. The other methods are inefficient because the environment is hotter than the body. In hot and dry conditions, the skin dries out, sweat evaporates and has you don't even notice it. But if the air is humid (full of moisture), sweat cannot evaporate.

That's why if you exercise in hot and humid conditions, sweat will roll and drip off your skin but you won't feel cooler. Since sweat cannot evaporate, the body needs the help of an air-conditioner (radiation), an electric fan or a good breeze (convection) to keep from overheating.

What sweat is made of

Sweat is composed mainly of water and trace substances like sodium chloride (salt), potassium, lactic acid and ammonia. Sodium and potassium are minerals that act as electrolytes to regulate blood pressure and water balance.

There are two types of sweat glands: eccrine and apocrine. Apocrine glands are actually scent glands located in the navel, armpits and groin. They produce a sticky kind of sweat that is odorless but reacts fairly with the bacteria in the skin (feed on it) produce the familiar stench.

The motion sweat glands, meanwhile, are all over the body and produce a watery sweat that helps regulate body temperature.

Everyone perspires

Everyone has a different sweating pattern. How much you sweat is affected by genetics, gender, age, fitness level and environment. Human beings can have between two to five million sweat glands. Women tend to sweat less and respond to sweat at higher temperatures compared to men.

It has been observed that people sweat less as they grow older. This means elderly people cannot tolerate heat as well as younger people. However, declining fitness levels might also be partially responsible because, in laboratory experiments, when both old and young participants were of similar fitness levels, there was no significant difference in their sweating patterns.

Fit people sweat more "efficiently" by sweating sooner in the workout, in other words, at lower internal temperatures. However, this doesn't mean that a fit person will always sweat more than an unfit person. A sedentary person doing the same intensity workout as a fit individual will get hot a lot faster and therefore will sweat more.

Overweight and obese people sweat more probably than normal weight individuals because of the extra insulation that tissue can temperature.

The environment plays a big role in how much you are going to sweat. If you exercise in an air-conditioned room, you will not sweat as much because the cold dry air quickly evaporates your sweat. You doesn't mean you are not burning many calories (calorie burn depends on the intensity and duration of the exercise). It simply means your body was really deal with the heat generated by the exercise.

Exercising in a hot and humid room will just exhaust you faster. You will not burn as many calories as you would like because you will stop working out sooner.

Invisible perspiration

If you weigh yourself right before going to bed and weigh yourself again right after waking up (without going to the bathroom), you will find that you are lighter. No, you haven't been sleepwalking to your gym. You lost water through perspiration or "invisible perspiration," as well as through exhaled respiration (in the form of moisture vapor droplets).

The overnight loss of water through your skin and breath explains why you are "thirsty" with a parched stomach when you wake up.

Dangerous practices

Not drinking water before, during and after exercise is a dangerous practice. It's like taking your car out for a long drive without any water in your radiator. If you sweat out 1% of your body's water in windy hot and humid conditions, a sports drink is more appropriate than water to replace lost electrolytes.

Meanwhile, wearing plastic or rubber clothes solely exercising is like wrapping your engine in plastic and then expecting your car to still run properly. You should never do these things to your car, so why do it to your body?

To download sample interval workouts, go to www.theglamdiaries.info/intervalworkouts

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Prone opposite arm and leg lift on stability ball

THIS is an all-around strengthener for the muscles at the back of the body—back of the shoulders, lower back, buttocks and hamstrings.

Equipment:
Stability ball

Exercise technique:
1. Bend down with the ball in front of you.

2. Place your stomach on the ball and roll forward until you have both hands on the floor. Your legs should be straight behind you on your toes. Keep your legs a little wider than hip width for better balance.

3. Lift your right arm and left leg up to hip level.

4. Slowly lower down.

5. Do the desired number of repetitions then switch sides.

Performance tips:
1. Exhale as you lift; inhale as you lower down.

2. Look down at the floor (not keep your neck in line with your spine).

3. Lift and lengthen.

4. Make sure to contract your buttocks muscles as you lift your leg to protect your back.

Repetitions:
Do 10 repetitions on each side.

Do 10 repetitions alternating sides.

Hold for 30 seconds. Do three sets on each side.

PBM fashion show featured professional badminton players, including Kanoza and Kanowit Kuanitsi, and showcased digital cameras and DVD players from JVC.

THE JVC Open Badminton opening was attended by JVC officials, including PBA president Amelita Ramos (fourth from left).

Call for entries to 2005 Badminton Open

IT TOOK less than half a decade for badminton to transform itself from a casual sidewalk pastime to a serious sport. Now, it almost rivals basketball as its grip on local sports lovers.

JVC first became associated with the local badminton scene with 2003's JVC Open and the 2003 Asian Badminton Championships in Manila. It soon saw its commitment to the sport with yearly competitions.

The JVC Open Badminton Championships is designed to discover talents who can be tested for future national teams. Now on its fifth year, the JVC Open, which is slated this June, promises more excitement and fun than.

"This is going to be the richest, biggest, grandest JVC Open so far in terms of prize money, participation and level of play. After four years of being in the forefront of badminton, we want to give these players the best tournament to play in," says Gildemar Takara, president of JVC (Phils.), Inc., during the recent launch of the 2005 Open at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza.

Takara reiterated JVC's commitment to the development of badminton as a fun and competitive sport for all ages. To give those in the countryside more chances to hone their talents and skills, JVC has also staged regional tournaments in Pampanga, Cebu, Davao and Bacolod.

Top badminton officials and key JVC officers were present during the launch, including Philippine Badminton Association vice president Amelita Ramos, JVC (Phils.) chair lawyer Beatrice Salud, JVC (Phils.) general manager Kazuo Uchida, Philippine Badminton Association Executive vice president Jose Edgar Agbayo (Ret.), Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay and Philippine Sports Commission officer in charge William "Butch" Ramirez.

The event, to be held under the auspices of the PBA, Philippine Olympic Committee and the Philippine Sports Commission, will also serve as part of the national team's preparation for the Southeast Asian Games.

To level the playing field, the organizing IMG has put up a separate tournament for the cream of the crop, the elite masters. This special tournament is exclusively for the former and current members of the national team, varsity players and past JVC Open champions.

The 5th JVC Open Badminton Championships will take place June 28-July 10. The tournament is divided into different categories: the Elite Masters, Elite, Juniors, Veterans Elite, Veterans Novice, Corporate Team and Celebrity categories.

Celebrities Richard and Lucy Gomez, Cindy Kurleto and Arsenio John Aquino will also take part in the tournament.

An interschool High School Team Event will be held. Qualifying rounds will be at the Powerhouse Badminton Center from June 26-July 3, and July 4-10, at the Glorietta Activity Center.

Registration starts on June 1. You are pegged at P200 per single entry and P400 for players joining two or three events. In corporate plans, exclusively for the country's top 1,000 firms, entry fee is at P2,500, with each team allowed to have a maximum of six players and maximum of 18. Deadline of submission of entries is on June 15.

Visit www.jvcbadminton.com or e-mail jvcbadminton@hotmail.com. Call 8917-52888/9, 89160666/8 and 8921-21-92881.

LIFESTYLE

Eat more, lose more

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

"There's nobody in my tummy."
—Winnie The Pooh

EVERYONE's dream diet is to eat more without gaining weight. This is not impossible. Although in Winnie The Pooh's case, it is.

A common complaint of dieters is they are always hungry. According to Barbara J. Rolls, Ph.D., professor of nutritional sciences, Pennsylvania State University in State College and co-author of The Volumetrics Weight Control Plan, "your stomach is more sensitive to the volume of the food you eat than to the number of calories the food contains."

Recent studies have shown that if you drink your daily calorie intake—say, from over 2,500 to 1,500—by eating smaller portions of your meals, you will most likely feel starved and deprived before the next meal time.

This emotion can lead to cheating by nibbling on snack items on the side. What's the solution? Eat low-energy density foods that can add bulk to your tummy signaling your brain you are full.

What to eat

Foods high in fiber or water will make you feel more than satisfied. You won't have the urge to snack around and will down the first thing you lay your hands on such as fast-food favorites like chips, crackers and pastries that are high-energy density foods.

Low-energy density foods: fruits, vegetables. High-energy density foods: cheese, crackers, fatty/oily meats, which have more calories than bulk making it necessary to eat more to feel full or satisfied.

Example: 2½ c of strawberries/apples and a medium-sized bowl of Jell-O is more diet-friendly than 2 tbsp of chocolate

The stomach is more sensitive to the volume, rather than the number of calories of food

ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY SANTIAGO

OR EVEN 5 c of raisins.

Water-watchers meal

Replace high-energy density foods with low-energy density foods. Example:

Instead of	Have
BREAKFAST: 1 cup canned grapefruit juice in pineapple juice 1 15-g sugar-coated cereal with whole milk/fat-free milk/soy milk 1 tablespoon butter	½ grapefruit/pineapple/papaya juice 2 low-fat oat-bran/psyllium muffins 2 slices whole-grain bread (no/light sugar) 2 tsp margarine spread
LUNCH: 6-inch ham sub with mayonnaise 1 carbonated drink	Ham and veggie wrap with honey mustard 1 c fresh fruit salad 1 c low-fat/fat-free soy milk 1 envelope instant oatmeal, half an apple or one orange
DINNER: Barbecued spareribs 1 c boiled beans	3 oz pork tenderloin/chicken breast/fish steak 1 c fresh salad with vinaigrette dressing 1 small baked potato or sweet red potato ½ c rice, brown

Replace regular ice cream with any ice cream (available at Alaska, Greenbelt 3 Theater, level 4, Tel. 7378522) as sorbet.

Before meals

Start with a course that can cause your appetite such as salad, soup or a drink. Those foods actually demand that they be eaten slowly thus allowing your stomach enough time to feel full. When you reach your main course, you will feel content to have smaller portions.

Remember: Fatty cuts of meat should be avoided. Eat lean cuts such lesser calories. Experiment with flavors by using herbs and spices instead of butter and oil.

Meal math

When doing the groceries, do a little mathematics if you want to determine whether the food you are buying is low-energy density. Most packaged foods indicate nutrition facts at the back.

To get the ED or energy density, calculate by dividing the calories per serving by the weight of the serving in grams.

Example: If ½ c of ice cream weighs 94 g and has 180 calories, divide 180 calories by 94 g. You get an ED of 2.4.

ED below 0.6 = very low (most fruits/veggies, reduced fat milk, light yoghurt, broth soups)

ED 0.6-1.5 = low (cottage cheese, low-fat cream like turkey (skinless breast without skin, tea, beef, pasta, rice, eggs, corn, legumes)

ED 1.5-4 = medium (beef (cuts fully pictured), fat-free chips, cheese, regular meats)

ED 4-9 = high (crackers, chips, chocolate, candy, cookies, nuts, bacon, butter oil)

Eat smart

Avoid fried foods (boiled shrimp is okay and has no calories. When you fry it, you get 175 calories).

Cut back on dry foods like crackers. These will tempt you to eat more.

Eat more fruits and vegetables.

Combine (if you have to) low-energy with high-energy.

Take high-fiber grains instead of low fiber foods.

The dieters' battle cry should be, "I will eat more food/friend/s foods because I am my own best friend."

Love and light!

Reference: Good Housekeeping, August 2004

"Lose Weight without being Hungry"

Questions on astral projection, angels, etc.

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Elcatrevo

I am a 25-year-old geology graduate of UP and now work as research assistant there. Since childhood, I've been fascinated with the psychic world. I bought your book recently, "Exploring the Powers of your Inner Mind" (revised edition). I love it and what you've written... continues to amaze me...

(Hats) off to my questions...

1. ... I believe I've experienced astral projection. I often regard it as just a (bad) dream. It usually happens when I stay up late and I am exhausted. I have dreams where I can't move my body. I can feel but cannot see my arm. However, I can actually "see" my surroundings.

I also see beings beside my bed like shadows. Just recently I saw a child running to my room (followed by) his (or her) pregnant mother (who) warned not to disturb my sleeping body.

Are they real spirits or just my imagination? If they are spirits, why is the mother pregnant? Do spirits get pregnant?

What you have experienced are real out-of-body experiences (OOBE) or astral projection. The beings you saw as astral beings are real and not products of your imagination.

Many people experience astral projection during sleep. When this happens, do not panic because you will surely return to your body. It is when you panic that problems occur. The astral body is sometimes called the Double Body, because it goes wherever you want it to go.

Spirits, of course, do not get pregnant. It was only your impression. Some women appear pregnant when they are not. How many well-known movie actresses were rumored to be pregnant only for them to deny it later?

2. If we all have spirit guides (or guardian angels) why can't we see them during astral projection? And if we attract negative entities (because of fear) during OOBE, then where are our guardians who are supposed to protect us? When we move to the lower planes with negative entities, do our spirit guides come with us?

First, let me make a distinction between the two terms often used interchangeably. A guardian angel is a Christian concept. It refers to what is called "messenger of God." An angel is pure spirit. A guardian angel, according to this belief, is assigned by God to each person upon birth.

A spirit guide may have been human before but now a highly evolved being that guides an individual by mutual agreement in his journey through life. A person may have several spirit guides but only one guardian angel.

The astral world has many levels. If you go to the lowest, almost physical, level of the astral plane, you won't see spirits or astral beings.

According to one belief, the astral world has seven levels. Each level has seven subworlds or planes. According to this belief, this is what Christ meant when he said, "In my father's house are many mansions and I go to prepare a place for you."

(The) guardian angels are always with us but our spirit guides may leave us once in a while to attend to others. Yes, they are with us even when we attract negative spirits but they cannot interfere with our karma nor with our will.

3. Psychics say the physical plane has the lowest vibratory rate. Why then do we have to reincarnate? Can't we stay in our spirit state by free will? Also, if reincarnation is true, why does population grow? Where do the (additional people) come from? Why does it seem that more and more criminals are born and the world seems to be getting softer?

The purpose of reincarnation is to perfect ourselves and to achieve divinity. To reach this goal, we need to undergo all types of experiences over many lifetimes and realms. We do not reincarnate only in the physical world but also in other states of being, in other planets and galaxies. We incarnate on earth to experience physical life and learn from it.

Population grows because not all that are now on earth were here before. Some are new souls who are on earth for the first time. Where do they come from? They were also created by God before time began. They wait for the physical vehicle (the ovulum) to develop. Many await physical incarnation.

It only seems that the world is getting worse and worse. Actually, it is not. Consciousness of the spirit world is greater today than before. We were savages before, eating each other; now we are more civilized and technologically advanced.

I am not sure if more criminals are born today than before. But what I know is there are many saintly beings and wise men and women being born today.

4. What are negative entities? Are they demons? What makes them negative? Are they also governed by the law of karma?

Negative entities are not necessarily demons. They could be earth-bound spirits of the dead who want revenge or who were very bad when they were alive and continue to be bad in the afterlife. There are also negative spirits or elementals that may harm human beings.

Yes, they are also governed by the laws of Karma. They also pay for their misdeeds because karma is the universal law of justice that adjusts effects to rightful causes.

Address letters to this column to Prince Plaza I, 105 Legaspi St., Legaspi Village, Makati City. Call 8107265 or 8926808 for information on seminars I conduct. E-mail jtlcatrevo@pdcnet.com.ph or visit http://www.jtlcatrevo.shutter.com. Listen to my dzBB radio program 7-8 p.m. every Sunday.

Feel young, stay young

THIS MONTH'S issue of HealthToday discusses how having the right attitude in the face of adversities will help you hurdle the obstacles and maintain better health.

Studies show a positive attitude will not only prevent depression, but also decrease the risk of infectious diseases.

Does life really begin at 40? A gynecologist says turning 40 is either a milestone or a meltdown, depending on your attitude. Being passionate about your dreams and beliefs is key to staying young.

One woman who stays young because of her passions is Sen. Pia Cayetano. After losing two very important people in her life, Cayetano has used the personal losses to fuel her zeal and determination as chair of the Senate Committee on Health and Demography.

HealthToday starts a new section, "Healthy Reads!" that will keep you updated on developments. It is also a book club organized by HealthToday, in collaboration with Power Books. Featured books are carefully selected to nourish the readers' mind, body and spirit.

Read the complete articles in the May issue of HealthToday available in all bookstores, newsstands, and retail outlets nationwide. Call 8926333 local 112 or e-mail mayblip.ph@asia.inquirer.net.

Rejuvenation haven at the heart of the city

SPOIL yourself and your family at the Westin Sports Club and Spa, and rejuvenate your body, mind and spirit.

The Westin Philippine Plaza on Roxas Boulevard, is a world-class resort with everything.

Members of the Westin Sports Club and Spa can have golf lessons with a pro at the 18-hole par and pitch green, or at the sepia range, driving golf balls into the sea.

Those who prefer tennis can bring a partner or train with an instructor on the matte-flow surface clay and eight covered courts.

The club has a lagoon-shaped pool and two long, winding slides for youngsters. An outdoor restaurant offers a la carte service at lunch.

A state-of-the-art gym also offers the services of a personal trainer.

The club has different kinds of massage. Facial and body treatments are also available.

Tips for healthier love life

MIRROR, the healthy lifestyle magazine, says spending time in the gym is not only healthy but also sexy.

According to the magazine, exercise stimulates, increases blood flow; it also raises the level of feel-good endorphins. A workout makes you feel more sensitive and alert and also gives you a better body image.

The latest issue of Mirror will also give you some tricks to improve your lovemaking skills. Also in this issue, Dr. Isabel Lopez Manal, a pioneer in the skin clinic business, shows how dermatological treatment can do wonders, using herself as an example.

Television host and singer Toni Gonzaga tells why she moved from GMA-7 to ABS-CBN.

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